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A Free
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
Truth and Error,
Especially in Matters of
RELIGION.

Wherein
Are propounded the Proper and Certain
Methods of finding and obtaining the
One, and of discovering and avoiding the
Other.

Together
With Reflections on several Authors; But more
Particularly on the Lord Bishop of Sarum's
Exposition on the *Thirty Nine Articles* of the
Church of England.

Also
A Preface containing some Brief Remarks on the late
Reflections on Humane Learning.

By JOHN EDWARDS, D. D.

L O N D O N :

Printed for Jonathan Robinson, Daniel Brown, An-
drew Bell and John Wyat, MDCCL.

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PREFACE.

NO Man is sure of the universal Acceptance and Approbation of what he offers to the World from the Press; and he is a very foolish Writer that pretends to any such thing. There is no fence against the Censures of some Readers; yea, even the best Writings have been disliked and cavill'd at, and sometimes by those that pretend to be the Wisest Men and the Greatest Judges. For it is not the Worth or general repute of a Book that guards it from being doom'd, if the Person who looks into it hath a mind to play the *Critick*, and exercise his *Censor's* Faculty, or especially if he entertains a grudge against the Author. It is some relief to a Writer that he can amass together abundance of Instances to this purpose, and thence gather, if he should fall into the Hands of such Inquisitors, that he fares no worse than Others have done before him.

We are told that *Homer* (for I will begin with the *Greek* Writers) had his *Zoilus*, one that lived about the time of *Ptolomeus Philadelphus*, and did what he could to expose the Faults of that Prince of Poets: as among the Moderns, *Julius Scaliger* is always severe against him, and favours *Virgil* even to an apparent Excess. *Plato's* Works were derided by * *Athenaus*: and

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* *Deipnosoph.* l. 11. c. 22.

by others are condemn'd as obscure, perplex'd and confused. *Aristotle*, who refuted the Doctrines of his Predecessors, and (as some say) burnt their Books, and then domin'd as sole Master of Philosophy, was afterwards smartly censured by others, and was branded with the Name of *Cuttle-fish*, i. e. dark and obscure, and his Principles were cried out against with very loud Exclamations: and according to (a) *Cornelius Agrippa's* Character of him, he was the worst of Men and Philosophers. *Demosthenes* was disliked by *Tully*, and it was thought a Disparagement that his Orations, smelt too much of the Lamp, which our nicer Nostrils at this Day can scarcely observe. *Herodotus*, who by the forementioned Latin Orator is once and again call'd (b) the Father and Prince of Historians, is by the same Person voted (c) Fabulous. He is disliked by *Thucydides* and *Serapio*, but especially by *Plutarch*, who hath writ a (d) Treatise against him, where he tracks him through his whole Book, and every where asperses him for his want of the due Qualities of an Historian; though perhaps the bottom of all was this, that *Herodotus* said some things concerning *Plutarch's* Country (*Beotia*) which he liked not, and so he took occasion to inveigh against him. I refer the Reader to *Henry Stephens*, who defends *Herodotus* against the Exceptions of that Writer and others of his Enemies, who represented him as a depraver of History. And I will only on this occasion make use of a Passage in *Plutarch* against

(a) De Vanit. Art. cap. 54.

(b) De Leg. l. 1. De Oratore, l. 1.

(c) Apud Herodotum sunt innumerabiles fabulæ. De Leg. l. 1.

(d) Περὶ τοῦ Ἡροδότου κακονομίας.

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against himself, (e) "If a Man, saith he, should pick out the worst things from the Writings of the Antients, and set them down together in a Book, he would deserve that Curse of the Tragedian, *Ὀκείῃ θύλῃ τὰς συμφορὰς*, May you perish that have nothing else to do but to collect the Faults of others. Plutarch did not think of this, it is likely, when he writ his Exercitation against *Herodotus*.

But to proceed, (f) *Dionysius of Halicarnassus* was pleas'd to find fault with *Thucydides's* History, and blamed the matter, stile, order and every thing in it, though Mr. *Hobbs* and others aver it to be as compleat a Work as is extant of that Nature. *Diodorus Siculus* is briskly disparaged by *Bodinus*, especially for his Stile and manner of Expression; and by *Ludovicus Vives* for the matter and subject of the History. *Zosimus* is condemn'd by *Evagrius* and *Nicephorus*; perhaps chiefly because he treats the Emperor *Constantine* the Great but roughly. *Appian*, a very considerable Historian, is represented by *Bodinus*, and *Scaliger*, and *Sicorius* as ignorant, defective, and very false in many parts of his History. *Josephus* the Jewish Historian is blasted as fabulous, and extremely deficient in Chronology by *Baronius*, *Salianus*, *Melchior Canus*, *Salmeran*, *Maldonate*, and other Pontificians; though he be reckon'd as one of the best Historians by *Justin Martyr*, *Eusebius*, *Jerom*, *Smidas*, *Scaliger*, *Calsius*, and other judicious Persons. Lastly, I will mention one who pass'd Judgment upon Authors by whole sale, I mean *Photius* whose *Myriobiblon* is a Censure on almost Three Hundred Writers.

(e) De Curiositate.

(f) Epist. ad Rom. c. i. m.

I pass to *Latin Authors*, and begin first with *Tully*, whose Oratory one would think might go down with a Critical Palate, and yet not only *Linaker* one of the greatest and ablest Criticks in the Latin Tongue, abhorr'd his Stile, and could not endure to hear him read; but more antiently his Orations were defamed by *Dion Cassius*, and his Stile was no ways pleasing to *Salust*. But *Asinius Pollio* (as it were to requite this Censure) saith of this latter, that he is an Author full of Affectation. And both *Quintilian* and *Suetonius* blame this *Salust* for his coyning of Words, for his affected brevity, and (the consequent of that) obscurity and abruptness of Stile. *Julius Caesar's* Commentaries, which are applauded by all impartial Judges, were voted by the foremention'd *Asinius* to be imperfect not only in respect of the Stile, but the truth of the matter set down by him. It is not to be wondred at, you will say, that *Caligula*, who pull'd down all the Statues of Illustrious Men and Worthies, was about putting *Virgil* and *Livy's* Works out of all Libraries, * *quorum alterum ut nullius ingenij minimeq; doctrina; altitum ut verbosum in historia negligenterq; carpebat*: but we find the latter of these Authors censured by very serious and understanding Men. His *Parasimely* was found fault with by *Pollio*, saith † *Quintilian*: and *Trogus Pompeius* condemns him for his feigned and imaginary Orations, which are so frequent in his Works: and he is accused by others of great Partiality in some Passages of his History: and *Bodinus* taxes his Stile as too Poetical, and on other accounts faulty. *Tacitus*, an other famous Historian, was accused long since by *Vopiscus* of falsifying, and more lately by *Baronius* in his *Annals*.

* Sueton. in Calig.

† Instit. l. 5. c. 5.

Annals. His Stile and his Digressions are disallow'd of by *Strada* in his *Prolusions*, and by *Lipsius* and *Alciat* in their Notes upon him. And our *Sir Henry Savil* in his Annotations blames his Phrase as intricate and perplex'd. *Lucius Florus*, a most elegant and choice Historian, is condemn'd by *Sigonius* and *Scaliger*, for being impertinent and too Poetical, and for interspersing so many *Hemistichs* in his Writings. *Quintus Curtius* is made a very sorry Writer by a late * Critick. *Quintilian* is not pleas'd with *Seneca's* Stile, but saith the same of it that *Caligula* did, that it was Sand without Lime.

I might take notice that *Terrullian* and this *Seneca*, with whom is joyned *Montaign* (who are accounted no despicable Authors by others) are disparaged and villified at a high rate by *Malebranche* for their too strong Imagination, and fantastick Stile, and weakness of Judgment; for their Vaniey and Trifling, Emptiness and Inconsistency, and yet the first of these Writers was one of the most Learned *Fathers* of the Church, and his Stile is particularly signaliz'd by that happy turn of Wit which is to be observed in it: the second was one of the most Accomplish'd *Moralists* of his Age, and of all the succeeding ones, and his Sentences are famed for their Pithy Brevity. The third was pleasant and diverting, free and open, and the most Genteel Author of that time wherein he lived. The *Jesuites*, *Palavicino*, *Florimond*, *Brietius*, *Surius*, *Spondanus*, &c. and other *Romanists* defame *Sleidan* and his History of the Reformation, but others highly praise them both. *Buchanan's* History of *Scotland* is disliked by *Cambden*, though others of as great Learning applaud it. There are some of

our own Age that are very free in their censure of Authors, at Monsieur Du Buisson's *Essai sur l'Art de l'Écriture*, and sundry others of that Nation. But Monsieur Les Chapelle doth commend them all, and is the Critick Parliament. *Charles de Salmasius* is impeach'd by his mean and somewhat methodical Writer. He is very sharp upon our Mr. Selden and his Writings, avowing that (b) they are full of long Digressions, that there is want of Order and Method, of perspicuity, and Plainness in them, that there is a Confused Learning in his Writings. Concerning our Excellent *Lightfoot* he thus pronouces, (c) He is a plodding Reader, and Excerpter of the *Antient* Writers, and generally is not much better than those dull Masters. In A Word, this Gentleman seems to have a mean Opinion of all Writers but himself.

Another Person of a better Genius, and a sounder Judgment, I come now to mention: and because he hath merited so great Vogue and Esteem by his *Reflections on Learning*, I reserve this peculiar place for him in my Preface. This great Concor of Censors hath used a very ample Freedom in reflecting on Antient and Modern Authors and their Writings. Wherefore of his Ingenious Performance I intend to say something, and if I chance to fall into his part, that is of a *Reflector*, I am sure he will not take it ill, and I am more sure he ought not. He is a True and Heartly Critick, and (d) lets us know at the very entrance that he is in good earnest, that he flings at Authors and their Writings, not as *Cornelius Agrippa*, only for a trial of skill, in a

Declaratio

(a) Art. Crit. pars 1. cap. 5.

(b) Ibid.

(c) Art. Crit. pars 3. sect. 1. c. 11.

(d) Preface.

Dictionary way, but he comes sober and serious
 out to overturn with Mens Opinions and
 World. In his Choice of Language his first
 offer is upon a Philosophick Pretext, whose
 Real Character and Abundance of Language (which
 he and another had taken long pains about)
 he takes for his of the same rank with his *Pythagorean*
Charm and *Mythical* *Allegory* and the Author
 himself is dignitized with the odious Name of
 a *Projector*. This first bold stroke of our *Reform*
de has us know how sharp his Pen will be in
 the other parts of his Undertaking. But by the
 bye, I do not see any great reason why he should
 be so offended at this Writer for his Ingenious
 Project of an *Universal Language*, seeing this
 would prove so acceptable a Blessing, and is the
 best Remedy against the *Division of Tongues*,
 which was inflicted as a Curse on Mankind. But
 he is for the Continuance of it, it seems, and ven-
 tures to assign a Reason why the Diversity of
 Tongues is still kept up. He profoundly resolves
 it into God's *Providence*; and tells us it is *ordain'd*
for a check to Mens Pride. Which I conceive
 may be better turn'd the other way for *Pride*
 and *Obstinacy* are the general attendants of the
 laborious attainment of skill in several Tongues.
 None are puff'd up more than your mighty *Py-
 lologists* who strive to excel in this kind only:
 none are so Supercilious and conceited for the
 most part. Whereas, if there were only One
 Language in the World, this Swelling would be
 allay'd, this Pride would cease, because Learn-
 ing would be an easy Acquest: a great deal of
 idle Literature would be pared off: Glossaries,
 Lexicons and Dictionaries, yea and our Authors
Dictionary *Dictionarium* would be at a low
 rate.

rate: and half of the most Libraries will be mere rubbish. When there is but One Tongue, Knowledge will be very Compendious, because Learning will not require that pains and study and application of Mind that it doth now, all which is confess'd by * himself. And consequently, when all the Difficulty is taken away, there will be no room left for *Haunting*. Therefore I do not apprehend how the Multiplicity of Languages is a *check to Pride*.

Next to Mitred Heads he seems to owe a grudge to Emperors, for we see that within a Page or two further the Great *Cæsar* can't escape his searching Pen, but is represented with a † *doubtful Character*. This Writer, who is more Imperious than the Emperor, will not suffer him to go unchastised: his peremptory sentence is that his Book concerning Grammatical matters (wherein he excell'd as much as in Arms) *deserves Correction*. Which Severity gives us to understand that had this Author been in the Senate-House at a certain time, he would have lent the Emperor one Thrust more than he had. He goes on in the following Page, and wields his Censors Rod without Mercy, || *Priscian* himself is accus'd of *Barbarism*: and *Sandius*, who corrected other Grammarians, is highly corrected himself. Nay, to give us a cast of the Height of his Censorship, * *Cicero* the great Master of Oratory, and the whole set of Latin Writers are excepted against as *Ungrammatical*. Even the mighty *Tully*, who was the standard of the Latin Tongue and of Exact Speaking, did not

* Were there only one Language, Learning would be a much easier thing than it now is. p. 8.

† P. 20.

|| P. 22, 21.

* P. 26, 27.

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understand the constructive part of *Grammatica*, but was defective in *Syntax*. And though the Orator vindicated himself by the *Authority* of other Good *Latinists* when this charge was impertinently brought against him in his life time, yet this Defence is not allow'd; but this Gentleman very unkindly attacks afresh the most Celebrated Writer in the World, and hath the confidence to charge the Prince of Orators with a School-boys Fault, that is, False Latin. And this he doth in a very serious mood: and, which is more amazing, he gathers from thence the *Insufficiency* of *Grammar* it self.

By the way I might observe that having in this Chapter of *Grammar* occasion to mention that Great Man *Du Fresno*, he could not let him pass without a lash. I take no notice now of the merits of the Charge, but only the Manner of expressing it; and this I should not do but that I am ambitious to imitate this *Reflector*, and to be as Nice as he is pleas'd to be. He accuses that Worthy Person of * *Partiality* for a party, though one would think that Party was included in *Partiality*, and consequently that this hath the air of a *Tautology*. Yet, as if he would vouch this manner of speaking, he sticks not to use it again, p. 232. I own that this is a very light Error, but in that place especially where it first occur'd, it hath some weight. The thing it self, I grant, is not worth the mentioning but only to shew that whilst this Gentleman is carping at the Latin Language and Stile, he forgets to speak exactly in his own Tongue. Whilst he is discouraging of the Propriety of Words, and censuring others Impropriety of Speech, he speaks improperly himself. But this must be said, he hath the

* P. 30.

the happiness to do it pertinently and to his purpose, for by his own defects and failings, (as well as by others) he proves what he undertook to make good, the insufficiency of Arts, and the Pretenders to them.

In his next Chapter he hath such an other slip, *before things were brought to the last extremity*, saith he, and I do not know but he uses the same way of speaking in some other places. But without doubt it is perfectly Tautological, and therefore is unfitting, and not to be used. I know he hath Examples to vouch him (though he himself is Example sufficient, and needs none to back him,) the Words are often made use of by the Author of the *Occasional Dealer*, twice in Num. 1. and again Num. 2. 6. 7. The *Monthly Mercury*, though a spruce Writer, seems to be much taken with it, and the *Gazetier* frequently use it. And it occurs some where, I remember, in the Sermons of One who is thought to be no bad Master of Language. But let it be where it will, no Man can make it good Sense, and it is impossible to defend the use of it. You may as well say, and maintain it that *Extreme Extremity* is a defensible manner of speaking, for *left and extreme* are all one. No Authors can vouch the *last extremity*, unless they can prove that a *final end*, (as well as an *initial beginning*) are tolerable Sense. But especially in our Author such a way of speaking is inexcusable, because he is all upon the hunt after Improperities in other Mens Writings; and especially in this Chapter of *Rhetorick*, where he is so severe upon the *Orators*, he should have been more than ordinarily careful not to be found tripping.

Seneca

Seneca comes next in his way, and * he joyns with Monsieur Malebranche in condemning of him as a weak and faulty Writer, and one that hath no good Sense in him. He laughs at those who imagin that Seneca writes with great force and strength, that his thoughts are lofty, and almost every line in him is a Sentence, and every Sentence seems a Reason. And he approves of Malebranche's Peremptory Conclusion, that there is little more in him at the bottom than a pomp of Words: whereas in truth Malebranche himself in what he hath let fall concerning Seneca hath discovered nothing more. With some false strokes of Rhetorick and with little artifices he labours to make good that Character of him, but no Man ever shewed less Judgment in any Censure than he hath done in this. And all Candour and fair Dealing are laid aside, for 'tis observable that he first ridicules, and then condemns him.

As for Malebranche himself, his true and impartial Character in short is this, Though he hath admirable Thoughts sometimes, yet generally he is made up of unaccountable Paradoxes, and his great Business all along is to Amuse and Dazele People: in so much that our Reflector himself in another place (p. 104) cries out against him for his too abstracted and refined Metaphysics. He every where nourishes Scepticism (as I shall have occasion to shew afterwards in the ensuing Discourse) he runs down received Truths, he subverts Foundations, and makes nothing of First Principles, and under pretence of higher flights of Reason and Arguing than other Men, betrays the Truth and Religion to the apparent Mischief of most that read him.

* P. 41.

him. He that doth not see this in that Writer, sees nothing.

As for *Seneca*, it is true he hath his flourishes, but no Author is always solid and exact. As to the main he is an Incomparable Writer, he is the greatest Master of Ethicks that we have: he hath left us many of the Closest Thoughts that ever came into any Mans Head, Thoughts that are noble, manly, and almost *Christian*. He sets these off in admirable Periods, in a very fine Aire of concise Language, which affords many Instances of the choicest Eloquence. So that when our Author exposes *Seneca*, he seems not to be over well skilled in the nature of the Subject which he is treating of, and quarrelling with, that is, Rhetorick and Eloquence. But indeed this Learned Gentleman is to be excused, for he having undertaken the Censure of Learning and Learned Men, he was to go through with it, and no Author was to be exempted: hence he disparages one of the greatest Philosophers of that Age as a trifling and empty Author: and this he doth for *Malebranche's* sake, that is, because he did so, whom he takes to be a Master in the Art of Thinking. In the same place he saith of *Montaign* that he is a Writer that doth not deserve to be mentioned, whom yet we find mentioned with great respect and honour by two very Great and Eminent Writers, *Justus Lipsius* and *Thuanus*. Wherefore it may be questioned whether the *Reflector* did not here forget what he had said and promised in his Preface, that he would treat all Men with Decency and Respect.

Next, he enlarges his Horizon, and strikes at a whole Nation, telling us that the * *French* style

* P. 44, 45, 46.

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style and way of speaking are too nice and curious.
One would think that by conversing with French Writers he had learnt to be so too. Their Rhetorick and Eloquence are *Weak and Effeminate*, and his Reason for it is strong and solid, because (you must know) a *Woman had the first prize of Eloquence* allotted her by the Academy. But this might rather have been turned to that Society's Advantage by this *Superfine Reflector*, to shew their Civility and Condescension in giving the Preference to one of that Sex, or to demonstrate their Integrity and Impartiality in owning and encouraging Worth and Excellency where ever they found them. He is not backward to pronounce concerning some of the choicest Members of this Learned Body that they are *affected in their style, almost to a degree of Superstition*, which may in time arrive to *Idolatry*. Nor doth he spare his own Nation and Country Men; even the * *English way of speaking is variable and depends upon humour*. And though some nice Persons may think that his own way of speaking is as great a Proof of this as any that he can produce, yet this Ingenious Reflector makes it out further thus, In Queen Elizabeth's time (saith he) the style was *Ciceronian*, that is, he fancies it to be, like that Queens Reign, long-winded: but it had greater faults afterwards, for he observes that it *degenerated*, as the succeeding Reigns did, and became *Fantastick* in King James's Reign, and in the next *Pedantick*, because larded with *Greek and Latin*: (though for the sake of the Pulpit, and some of the Greatest Men of the Church I think that might have been omitted) In the time of Rebellion it grew *canting*, and so continued till the Revolution, when it

* P. 48, 49, 50.

it became *solid and strong*. But he tells us we must not expect that it will last long, for *in the next age a more pleasing Eloquence may be found out*. I don't know whether he will prove a Prophet or no: but I will lay odds against him, that, if he survives till that change, he finds fault with it, and acts the *Reflector* still. I have this only to remind him of, that among the several Alterations of the *English* stile and way of speaking which he undertook to enumerate, he forgot to tell us what it was in King James the Seconds time, that is, trimming, cajoling, and smoothing the way to Rome, presenting us with a *Mock-Popery*, and most favourable ideas of the Roman Religion. But thanks be to Heaven, this mode of Speaking arrived not to its Perfection, and came not to be the received *Language and Idiom* of the *English*. And it appears from this Gentlemans so open and hearty Detestation of *Popery*, (which according to him is *that Religion for which of all others we have the most abhorrence*) that he would never have inured his Tongue to that Dialect.

Then, after he had blessed us with that great and profound Notion, that † *God Almighty neither stands in need of Logick, nor uses it*, he takes occasion to charge *Aristotle* with defects in his *Logick*, and especially the Invention of * *Syllogisms*, which are a great offence to our Author, and a wonderful demonstration of the *Insufficiency* of *Logick*. *Ramus*, though he was one of the first Reformers of Learning, and therefore might (one would imagin,) be acceptable to a *Reflector on Learning*, is slighted and disregarded by him. My Lord Bacon, the Great Restorer of the Arts, cannot pass Muster with him

† P. 51.

* P. 53, 54.

him, but is reprimanded for * running into the fault that he condemns in others, and inventing of fine Words to express very common and ordinary things. He finds fault with † Des Cartes and Monsieur Arnauld as unskillful in Logick, and a (a) Third (whom he grants to be an Author of an establish'd Reputation) he is pleas'd to honour with the Title of Mountebank; and he thinks fit to inform the World that he is too fanciful to make a Logician. So that now he is no longer one of an establish'd Reputation: So easy a thing it is with our Author to raise or demolish a Mans Name, to make or annihilate a Mans Reputation.

In this Chapter of Logick (b) he snibbs the French Philosopher for making this one of his First Principles of Reason, that the being of a God is to be proved from the Truth of our Faculties, and the Truth of our Faculties from the being of God: which he condemns as too circular to be safely built on. And he would rather have him suppose the Truth of our Faculties than undertake to prove it. But so far as I can judge he finds fault with him without a Cause: for as for the mere Circulariry of the Proof, there can be no hurt in that, because it is acknowledged and approved of in some other Points of great Moment; thus the Truth of our Saviour's Miracles is not only evinced from the Nature of them, but from his excellent Doctrine that he taught; and the truth of this Doctrine is established by his Miracles. And many other great Instances might be assign'd wherein the most considerable Truths of our Religion admit of a Mutual and Reciprocal Proof: and no Man thinks that one is prejudicial

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* P. 57.

† P. 58, 59, 60.

(a) P. 62, 63.

(b) P. 58.

to the other. Why therefore should this kind of Proof be rejected here? And why should we run all upon *supposal*? He offers at a reason for it in the following Words, He (i. e. Des Cartes) had better have supposed our faculties to be true, for they being the Instruments that we make use of in all our Proofs and Deductions, unless we suppose them to be true, we are at a stand, and go no further in our Proofs. So that the way of *supposing* seems to be more rational than that of *doubting*. But it is not more rational than that of *proving*, which should have been his Conclusion if he had attended to his Premises: for he was preferring the way of *supposing* to that of *proving*; wherefore instead of the word *doubting*, he should have said *proving*: else I conceive his Arguing is *Illogical*, whilst he is treating of *Logick*.

But to wave that, and to come to his Argument, namely that the Faculties must be supposed to be true because they are *Instruments* that we are to make use of in our Proofs. Then it seems their being *instruments* hinders them from being proved to be such: and how then do you know them to be Instruments? Or have you a Gift of knowing this without being able to make any Proof of it? Surely such pretences do not become a Rational Enquirer, but have a savour of that *Philosophick Enthusiasm* and *Fanaticism* which he censures afterwards. If you say the Faculties cannot be proved to be true because of their being *Instruments*, then be pleas'd to prove (if you are for *proving* any thing) that there is something which hinders the proving of these to be true, when as all other things admit of this. Shew what it is that priviledges and exempts these from *tryal*; for what you assign'd is of no weight, namely, that we make use of these in

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all our Proofs. This is rather a Reason why we should try them, that so our Proofs of other things may not be successless. *These* had need to be look'd into in the first place, and well examin'd, for if the *Instruments* of our Action be not taken care of and rightly settled, all our Operation is in vain. Wherefore to talk of *supposing* in this case, and to sit down with it, is very strange and unphilosophical. Had this been made use of by others, questionless he would have alledged it as an *Objection* against the Certainty of Humane Sciences, and truly it had been a sufficient Objection. See how hard a thing it is to please this Gentleman: in other places he complains of the Arts and Sciences for their want of *Proof*, and here he remonstrates against *Proving*, and would have us rest only in bare *Supposition*.

In his next Chapter * *Socrates, Plato, Aristotle* (that great Triumvirate of Philosophy) are slighted as sorry Masters of *Ethicks*. The † *Stoicks* are sentenc'd as *Paradoxical*, which indeed is a Censure as common and vulgar, as it is well grounded. And he hath done the *Jesuites* right in what he delivers of their *Morals* and their *Casuistical Discourses*. Only I think it is plain that he comes too near them himself in the Doctrine of *Probability*, which is the ground of that vast Liberty which he indulges himself in throughout his whole Book; he acts all along upon that loose Principle, and resolves all Arts and Humane Learning, and the Effects of them that respect Practise, into a *Probable Opinion*, and sometimes he will not allow them so much. He is so far from being Dogmatical that he runs into Pyrrhonism.

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The Writers of *Natural Philosophy* he condemns by whole sale, and these both Antient and Modern. He is very sharp and severe upon *Cartesius*, and votes his *Mechanism* to be (a) *imaginary*, *groundless* and *impious*, and his whole *Philosophy* a By-blow, a spurious Brat: he was not the Parent of it, but Father *Mersennus*. And 'tis to be observ'd that wherover he lights on this *French Philosopher*, he mauls him most unmercifully, and shews himself a sworn Enemy to all *Cartesians*; whether it is because he hath an aversion to all *Philosophy* of *French Production*, or whether he hath an ill Opinion of the whole Kind. He spares not the *Royal Society*, but presumes to be Witty upon some of that Body, in an others Words, calling them (b) *vain Men* who dream of a possibility of a Voyage to the Moon, and talk of making Wings to fly thither, as they would of buying of Boots to take a Journey. Our Comical Reflector shews by this that he hath bought his, and Spurs too, and resolves to make his way thorough. In the Close of this Chapter of *Natural Philosophy* he plays upon his Friend Mr. *Le Clerc*, and though in part he owns his *Modesty* (which few else would) yet he complains of his * *Performances in Physicks*, as well as his other Works, as faulty enough.

In the next Chapter (c) he laughs at *Ptolemy* and *Copernicus*, and all that adopt their Hypotheses: (d) he makes himself Merry with *Hewelius* and *Ricciolus*, and one may plainly perceive by what he saith that he hath no fancy to leave his present quarters in the Happy Society he is in, and go and inhabit in the Moon. Monsieur *Poiret* for being so stiff a *Cartesian* fares

(a) P. 80, 81, 82.

(b) P. 84.

* P. 86.

(c) P. 88.

(d) P. 94.

The Preface.

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the worse, and purchases the Name of a * *Phanatick in Philosophy*: though the proof of it which this Author gives is not very considerable, unless he had skill to prove that *Philosophy* and *Divinity* are the same.

Before I take my leave of this Chapter I will take notice of his *Objection* which he starts against the *Copernican Hypothesis*, and I will shew it to be of no weight. It is this, that * *Regularity of motion is unfathomable in this Hypothesis*. Though I'm no great friend to the Doctrine of the Earths Circumrotation (no more than I perceive he is) yet I don't apprehend that this Reason of his against it is valid. Supposing the Earth to move in a *fluid medium*, he asks concerning it, *Who is there that can imagin that its motion should be so regular and uniform as it is?* But with more reason it may be said, who is there that can imagin otherwise, supposing he believes a Divine Architect, the Framers of the Earth and the whole World? If he be perswaded of the Power and Providence of God, he hath no ground of doubting and raising Scruples about it. What though *the fluid which the Earth moves in be unstable and movable?* Is this any Impediment to the Divine Superintendency? Certainly if we philosophize aright (and that I think this Writer is not an Enemy to) we must own this Vast Fabrick of the Earth and the Managing of it to be the Work of the Almighty: and if we do this, we cannot but satisfy our selves that the Regular Motion of it may be maintain'd even in the midst of fluctuating Matter. Wherefore I think our Author falls short of his wonted sagacity and reasoning when he argues from † *the exactest movements of*

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* P. 103.

* P. 90.

† P. 91.

Machins which humane Wit can frame, and tells us, that these are subject to innumerable disorders, either from the breaking of the Spring of their Motion, or wearing of their Wheels, or some other external impulse, or inward decay; and therefore always want our care, either to set them right, or keep them in order: and thence he inferrs that this Vast Frame of the Earth can't be kept in a regular Motion. But who would have thought that our Learned Author would have argued from humane wit to the Divine Wisdom, from feats of *Art* to the stable works and productions of Nature and Providence, from the make of a Clock or a Watch, or any other piece of Artificial Mechanism to the great and stupendous Machin of the World? To compare these together is much below the Acuteness, as well as the pious Disposition, of our Reflector. He doth not here speak with that deference to Providence and the Divine Power and Conduct which at other times is to be observ'd in what he writes. He seems to have forgot what he had said himself some Pages before, that Persons who enquire into and discourse of such matters as these * should be content to resolve all into the Power or Providence of God. This is the way he commends to others: I advise him to take it himself, and then his Objection will be silenc'd, and by himself, and I'm sure it can't be done by a better hand. He may remember that in an other place he blames (and that justly) those bold and daring adventurers in Philosophy † who explicate the production (and accordingly the preservation) of the World by the Laws of Mechanism, without a God. Though I am no stiff Copernican, yet

* P. 85.

† P. 79.

to do them right, I think their Hypothesis may easily be held without the least favouring of this *Atheistical Mechanism* he speaks of. Even as Natural Philosophers (without any other help) they will not be backward to acknowledge that the Wheels of this mighty Machin of the Earth were not only set a going by the Almighty Hand, but are ever since continu'd and supported by the same, and are constantly beholding to the assistance of the first Maker and Mover: so that 'tis no wonder that they move so orderly and regularly.

And yet this may be further said that our Author is not to urge this *regularity* very nicely, as if there were no deviations in this Motion, for Astronomers of very great Note are of Opinion that there is not, neither hath been of late, the same *Distance between the Sun and the Earth* that was observable many Ages past: which alteration may be imputed to the Variation of the Earths Motion. Or, seeing the skillfullest Astronomers in the Ptolemaick way own some Irregularity in the *Sun's* course, (as 'tis well known they do when they tell us there is a mutability in the *Declination* of the Sun, and that this Luminary is not removed so far Southerly from us in Winter, nor comes so much Northerly towards us in Summer as it did in some former Ages) seeing, I say, they confess this Luminary not to be so steady and fix'd but that it hath undergone some Variation, then it is but turning the Tables, and translating the same thing to the body of the *Earth*, after the Copernican hypothesis, and it will be own'd that its Motion is not perfectly uniform. And I doubt not but if we should search into it, we should find matter to adore the Wisdom and Power of God in this

Manage-

Management. And lastly, our Author's Objection drawn from the *fluidity of the medium* is not good and valid, because the same may be rais'd against the Motion of the Sun about the Earth (if he inclines to that) and indeed against the Motion of all the heavenly Bodies, which are contain'd in some *fluid ether*: we see that they perform their Circuits very regularly *as to the main*, and they are not put out of their Course by the *fluidity of matter* they are environ'd with. Wherefore I conclude that there was no ground for what our Author saith, that *this is a difficulty which the Copernicans cannot easily get over, and which will perplex any Man's Understanding that will consider it*: for from what hath been briefly suggested it appears that there is no difficulty in this matter, and that it can't possibly perplex any Man's Understanding that was not perplex'd before.

In a whole Chapter together he falls upon the Historian's Greek and Latin, as well as others both *Antient* and *Modern*, and represents them as a pack of *Liars*. There is no *truth*, nor *care*, nor *integrity* to be found in *History*: which he tells us in his *Preface* he intends as an *Historical Account*, &c. * He will needs have both *Petavius* and *Scaliger* to be mistaken in the *Chronological Points* they write about. † He impeaches *F. Pagi* of *Ostentation*. He represents the late Learned Bishop of *Chester*, *Dr. Pearson*, as a remarkable Example of the *power of Prejudice*. And now when his Hand is in, and the Lash is going about, he rebukes the *Geographers*, (as if they were to undergo the scourge for being *Vagrants about the Earth*) and both those of old, and the

* P. 130.

† P. 131.

later ones. * That Great Linguist and Philosopher Monsieur Bochart is a fanciful Man, and all his arguments are pretensions. † He thinks he doth *Kossius* right; (and so do some others besides him) when he saith he delights in Paradoxes, as much as to say, he takes little care to be credited in what he delivers; ‡

Next he falls upon the Civilians, p. 146. &c. and that we may see he is for small games, rather than he will stand out, he objects to them their Mistake in the Word *Pandect*, which is a masculine, and yet used by them in the feminine acception, p. 148. But he would have dropt this Objection if he had remembered that, though the Greek Word be of male gender, yet when it hath a Latin termination given it, it becomes Female, of which there are several known Instances. Since he was pleas'd to condescend to such Minute things as these, it might have been expected that he would here have taken notice of that corrupt Mark, namely ff, which the Books of the *Pandects* are known by. Instead of *¶*, the first Letter of the Word *Pandects*, there is corruptly written a double f, and yet the Gentlemen of the Civil Law let this go uncorrected. Such an other blunder is that of our Common Lawyers and Attorneys (which I the rather mention because it is so common, and yet so little known, yea even to some of the most understanding Men of that Profession, as I have made trial) in their Deeds and Writs they constantly make x p stand for *Christ*, as is evident in the Words *Christian* and *Christmas*, which they write thus, *Xpian* and *Xpmas*; which mistake had its rise from the antient way of setting down the two first letters,

* P. 138 139.

† P. 142.

letters, to wit X P, of Christ's Name in Greek, for the whole Name X P I S T O S: whence some ignorant Scribes thought that these two Letters belong'd to the Latin or English Alphabet, and were the same with x and p, and accordingly used them in Writing. And at this day this corrupt Writing prevails, and is not taken notice of and corrected by Men of that Faculty.

When our Author is attacking the *Civil Law* (and what is it that he is not able by virtue of his Learned Prowess to attack?) he flings at the very Emperor * *Justinian* (and we know it is not the first Emperor he hath thought fit to make bold with) by whose order the Body of the Civil Law was collected, and at *Tribonian* who was the Compiler of it. The one is tax'd for his Ignorance (though it is somewhat hard to expect that *Kings* and *Emperors* should be great Clerks) the other for his Corruption, and want of Integrity. So this Learned Reflector spares neither Crown'd Heads, nor Gown Men. * He proceeds next to the *Canon Law*, where he falls foul upon poor *Gratian* the Compiler of the *Decrees*, for his Ignorance, and for his not having a favourable Opinion of *Humane Learning* (p. 164.) and yet this latter is the very thing which he hath signalized himself by throughout his whole Book. It seems that which was faulty in *Gratian*, is not so in him, or at least he carries it off so. But I am sorry to take notice of some thing worse: it is observable that in this part of his Book, which refers to the *Church* and *Religion*, he is more sportful and ridiculing than in any other Chapter. Perhaps he was sensible of himself, when he writes himself *Gentleman* in the Title Page,

* P. 149.

* P. 160.

Page, to avoid the odium and censure which he might contract by making this Chapter, which relates to *Fathers*, and *Councils*, and the *Canons* of the Antient Churches, favour so rankly of Satyr.

But he is a Catholick Inquisitor, and flies at all, and gives no quarter to any rank of Persons: the next he censures are * *Physicians*, fearing perhaps they would begin with him, and find themselves some Work where there is so stirring and warm a temper. *Hippocrates* and *Galen* fall under his stroke, with *Avicenna* and all the *Arabian* Translators of the latter; together with the *Chymists*, whose *Pair Royal* of Principles he exposes as much as the *Galenists* do: nor will he attend to the Modern Spagyrist who have added two more, viz. *Phlegm* and *Caput Mortuum*, † He laughs at all the *Modern Discoveries*, and weeps over the poor and pitiful deficiencies in *Botanicks* and *Anatomy*.

In an other Chapter he criticizes on || *Critical Learning*: and after he had talk'd his fill against *Criticks*, he sets up for one himself, and ventures to add one Word more to our * *Glossaries*. But though I question not in the least that his skill in the *Critical Art* is proportionable to his vast stock of Learning in other things, yet I believe it will be seen that he hath here no Foundation for what he offers. For whereas it appears from that part of the *Byzantine History* which is written by † *Chalcondylas*, that in *England* heretofore this wicked Custom prevail'd, that when one was invited to a Friends House, it was part of his usual Entertainment to lie with the Spoule of that Person who invited him: this Author

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* P. 172. &c. † P. 181, 182. &c. || P. 187. * P. 203.
† De rebus Turcicis lib. 2.

corrects this Passage, and averrs that the Greek Word *κίσα* is not meant of *lying with their Neighbour's Wife*, but only of *Saluting and Kissing* her, which is the ordinary usage at this day. But this is so plain and obvious a Mistake that the mere rehearsing of the Historian's own Words is sufficient to silence and confute it.

Which before I do, I will premise this, to clear the way, that the English Word *Kiss* is from the Saxon *Kyssan* and the Tutionick *Kussen*, and 'tis probable that these were derived from the Greek *κίσα*, *κίσα*, *oscular*; nay a Great Etymologist is ready to take his * Oath that they have their original from thence. But our Reflector (p. 24.) hath declared himself no friend of *Etymologists*, and therefore this will do him no service. But if he should urge this *Derivation*, yet it would be of little use to him, because, though it is not deny'd that the verb *κίσειν*, with which some confound *κίσα*, in one of its Significations is rendred *osculari*, yet it is to be remembered that the primary one (as all Lexicographers agree) is of an other import, for *κίσα* is rendred by them *concupio*, *in utero gesto*, *pregnans sum*, and this is the sense which is frequently in use among Authors that have written either in Prose or Verse: whereas the other Signification is but very rarely made use of, and chiefly among the Poets. Now, this makes it probable that *Chalcondylas*, who was a *Græcian*, uses the Word here (being also an *Historian* and relating things in a plain way) in the most common and obvious Sense, in the primary Meaning of it, or at least in a Sense that looks that way, for he be-

* Si Græcus essem, omnino jurarem orta a Gr. *κίσα*, *κίσα*, *oscular*. Skianer. Etymol. Ling. Angl.

The Preface.

XIX

being a Modern Greek may be permitted to distort the Word a little, and to apply *κύνειν*, or the Participle *κύων*, to the *Man*, as *τίκτειν* is both *parere* and *gignere*. Nay, he seems not to stand in need of any Excuse, for we shall find that *Hesychius* (in the Word *κύων*) expounds *κύων* or *κύων* (which is the same) by *γυναικας*. If we consider these things, we shall conclude it reasonable to believe that the Word *κύνειν* in this place of *Chalcondylas* is not meant of Kissing, but of some thing else: which will further appear by producing the Text it self.

I shall therefore first set the Words down in the *Greek*, and then in the *Latin* Translation, that the Reader may take the full sense of them.

Νομίζεσαι δὲ τέλους τὰ ἀπὸ τὰς γυναῖκας τε καὶ τὰς παῖδας ἀπαικισίμας, ὅτε ἀνὰ πάντων τὴν νῆσον, ἐπιδόντες τις ἐς τὴν οὐκ ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς οἰκίας ἰσθμὸς καλέμενος, κύωνται τὴν γυναῖκα, ἢ τὸν ἐκτεταταὶ αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐν ταῖς οἰδοῖς δὲ ἀπαλλάττει παρέχοντες τὰς αὐτῶν γυναῖκας ἐν ταῖς ἐπὶ τῆς οἰδοῖς. Νομίζεσαι δὲ καὶ τὴν οὐκ ἐπὶ τὴν φραντῶν χωρῶν, τὴν ταυτὴν παράλον, ἔχει Γερμανίας. Καὶ ὅτε αἰχμύρην τὸ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῖς κύωνται ταῖς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς θυγατέρας. This is the Original: now take the Translation, as it was done at first by *Comranus Clauserus*, and since revised and retain'd by the Famous Author that hath publish'd the *Byzantine History*. *Parva ipsis, uxorum liberorumq; cura est, itaq; per universam insulam hic mos servatur, quando quis amicus domum vocatus ingreditur, ut primum cum amici uxore concumbat, deinde benigne hospitio excipitur. In peregrinationibus quoq; multis utuntur uxoribus amici. Eadem consuetudo observatur in Phrantalorum regione ibi maritimâ, usq; ad Germaniam: nec probrosum ducunt uxores & filias in hunc modum impregnari.* Here we see an Instance is assigned to prove that the Men of this Island at that time shew'd but little care and concern for their

their Wives and Daughters: for so I would translate the Greek, after I have first mended it, and restored it to its true Reading, viz. *οὐκ ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ* namely because when upon an Invitation they used to go visit their Neighbours, the first thing they did was to have carnal converse with the Woman of the House, nor 'tis probable, in her absence with a Daughter that was grown up; this was the first Welcome to the place. Whereas, if you understand the Word *κατα* of friendly saluting only, you make no Sense of the foregoing Words, which express the little care that Husbands then had of their Wives, or Parents of their Daughters. Any Man may be sensible that this can't have any respect to an ordinary salutation: the Historian doth not tax their carelessness for suffering their Wives or Daughters to receive a friendly kiss of those that came to visit them at their Habitations, but he gives this as the proof of it, that they tamely permitted their Wives or Daughters to be carnally known by those that came to pay them a Visit at their Houses. (As is the Practice at this Day in some parts of *America*: it passes with them as a testimony of Friendship and Hospitality to give up their Wives and Daughters to the Disposal of those that come to their Houses.) This was grown a General Custom, the Historian saith, and he blames them for it, not for an innocent and indifferent Salute.

Besides, that this is the plain meaning, and consequently, that the Greek Word is thus to be understood, is manifest from what immediately follows, for the Historian goes on to give farther Instances of this lewd and scandalous Usage among the *British* People at that time. *When they travel abroad*, saith he, *they have one*

an others Wives in common: and this Custom is kept up in a Neighbouring Region that borders on the Seas, and stretches out as far as Germany. The Inhabitants of these Places count it no reproach and disgrace that their Wives and Daughters were given with Child after this manner. Which undeniably makes it evident that this part of the History is all of a piece, and speaks of that dishonest and wicked Custom, which prevails among them in those days, of Corrupting and Debauching their Neighbours Wives and Daughters. These latter (*τοῖς ἄλλοις*) are the same with *ταῖς* in the beginning of this Historical Passage, and that was the ground of my making some Correction and Amendment in the Greek, and reading *ταῖς ἄλλοις* in stead of *ἡ ἑκάστη*. From the whole I gather that (though our Learned Author hath given us sufficient Specimens of his Talent in the Critical way of Learning, to the mortification of P. Simon and Mr. Le Clerc, yet) he was under a Mistake, when he undertook to fix a new Interpretation here on the Greek *ἡ ἑκάστη*, and that he turned Critick before there was sufficient occasion for it. Some Persons of free thoughts may perhaps think that in his own Definition of Criticism, which we find in this Chapter, he hath given us the best and shortest account of his whole Performance that could possibly have been given, for he saith it is little more than an art of finding faults, and those commonly little ones too, and such as are of small importance to the Scope and Design of the Author. But I forbear to pronounce thus of the Learned Censurer, who hath out-done many of that Profession.

In the last place, the Hebrew Rabins and other Jewish Writers are chastised by him: as if all their

their Writings abounded with as many Fictions and Conceits as their *Rabbih* and *Zohar*. But among the Uncircumcised he is somewhat favourable to (a) *Maimonides*, for the sake of a *Latin* Saying which might have been delivered in *English* as well, and the rather because he had before noted it (b) *Pedimick* to use *Latin* and *Greek* (though it seems it is not so to use *French* and *Italian*) and more especially because he hath mistaken the Author's Words, and not quoted them right, if he took them out of Mr. *Selden* de *Dis. Syr. Syntag.* 2. c. 4. where there are no such Words as *qui primus inter suos desijt nugari*; but these are the Words that are to be found in that place, *qui primus Rabbimorum delirare desijt*. It is true, they occur in *Isaac Casaubon's* 16th *Exercitation*, where what *Pliny* in his Preface to his *Natural History* saith of *Diodorus* the *Sicilian*, *Inter Græcos desijt nugari*, he applies to *Maimonides*, and saith, *primus inter suos*, &c. And I remember *Joseph Scaliger* in an Epistle to *Casaubon* saith the like, *solum illum inter Judæos desijisse nugari dicam*. But seeing the Reflector had not his Author in readiness for the *Latin* he produced, I ask whether it would not have been better to have told us in plain *English* that *Maimonides* was the first of all the Rabbies that left off trifling and playing the Child. I grant that all this is but Nicety, but if a Man will be Nice when he treats of other Writers, he cannot be offended if he be treated so himself.

He fixes a mark of Reproach on our Countryman Mr. *Sheringham*, p. 209. And a little after this (p. 211, 212.) he slights and vilifies the *Arabian Philosophers*, *Physicians* and *Historians*, as well as others. And thus there is an end of the

(a) P. 207.

(b) P. 49.

the applauded performance of our Nice Observer and Severe Reprover, who takes upon him to reflect with freedom on *Learning* and *Learned Men*, and with great Art and Learning to depress the Credit of Arts and Sciences.

But to what purpose is all this? His answer is ready in his *Title-Page*, namely, to *shew the Usefulness and Necessity of Revelation*: and this he enlarges upon in the *Conclusion* of his Book. But who sees not that he stumbles at the Threshold, and that both at his going in and coming out? For I appeal to this learned Gentleman himself whether upon second Thoughts, he finds any Affinity between those *Humane Arts and Sciences* he treats of, and *Divine Revelation*; between the various Defects and Uncertainties of the one, and the absolute Perfection and Certainty of the other. And if he can't find (as I conceive he can't) any Connection between these two, I am sure 'tis impossible to prove the *Necessity* of the latter from the *deficiencies* of the former. I would establish this Authors repute on Good Grounds, and therefore I cannot applaud him for such *Inconsequences*. Neither need he or his Friends desire it, for his learned Attempts will gain him that alone, without such improper Assistances. I speak only my private Judgment, I must needs say I do not like his *way and Method* of *shewing the Necessity of Revealed Truths*; as if there were not enough to be said for it without battering down the Credit of all *Arts*. Doth he not think that it will be objected that he is put hard to it, when the Authority of the *Bible* can't be maintained by him without the defaming of all *other Writings*? As if the *Christian Religion* can't be admired and valued, unless *Humane Learning* be exposed to Scorn and

Contempt; as if we could not find out Reason
 for Religion without peering on the Arts and
 Sciences with glasses, and without affronting
 and abusing some unblemish'd Authors, and
 I ask who is there besides this Sagacious Wri-
 ter that sees the force of Argument in these *Gen-
 tlemen's* queries, which he makes use of, *revis. Caesar* and
Tully and all the Tribes of Latin Writers were
 but sorry Grammarians, and there is not one
 Good Starch Grammarian in the World,
 therefore there is a Necessity of *Revelation*. Or
 thus, *Seneca* was overboke and empty Writer,
 and there is no such thing as a Good Orator or
 an Eloquent Man in the World; therefore the
Bible is absolutely necessary. Or again, *Aristotle*,
 and *Ramus* and *Des Cartes* and my Lord *Bacon*,
 and I know not how many more, were defective
 in Logick; Ergo the Assistance of *Revealed Truth*
 is requisite. Or thus, *Physick* and *Anatomy*
 and *Botanicks*, and *Criticism* are all deficient
 and uncertain; therefore there is need of the
 Sacred Scriptures. This is the Strength of this
 Gentlemans Objections and Reflections; this is
 the Sum of his Arguing, if we may call it so.
 But truly it is impossible to Argue in this Case, be-
 cause there is no dependance at all between the
Antecedent and the *Consequent*. And it must needs
 be so because these two, *Human Arts* and *Divine
 Revelation*, are quite different sorts of Know-
 ledge and Learning, and (as hath been suggest-
 ed before) one depends not at all upon the other.
 Nothing is more evident than that the Discove-
 ries and Improvements belonging to either are
 of a distinct and peculiar Nature, and have a
 different Original, and tend to different ends.
 No Man can imagine that the Inspired Writings
 were

were designed to give Rules and Directions about the Common Arts and Sciences: no, they treat of greater and higher things. Which is sufficient to prove that Natural or Artificial Learning hath nothing to do with that which is Supernatural and Divine. The Imperfections of Grammar or Rhetorick or History have no reference to the Perfection of Revealed Religion, nor can they any ways commend and increase it, seeing these are conversant about Different Subjects, and such as have no Cognation with one another. For this Reason the decrying and depressing of humane Authors will not exalt the credit of Divine ones. Nor are those defects and faults in Natural Philosophy or other Human Sciences, which this Writer complains of, and so triumphantly exposes, to be supplied or remedied by the Sacred Books. The mistakes of Physick or Anatomy, which he so industriously aggravates, are not to be rectified by the Inspired Volumes. And hence it follows that though this Learned Author shews the Insufficiency of Common Learning, yet it avails nothing to the evincing of the *Usefulness* and *Necessity of Revelation*, which is the thing he pretends.

The main thing which it evinces is this, that seeing we are defective and shallow in the Knowledge even of these Matters which are of an inferior Nature, it is no wonder that Divine Truths, which are so sublime and Heavenly, transcend our Understandings and Capacities. If Common Learning be so difficult, how much more difficult is that which is Sacred and Supernatural? And therefore we should be Modest and Humble in our Thoughts and Discourses of the great Mysteries of Religion. This is the

true and legitimate way of Arguing, but the other is fallacious and precarious, and wholly inconsequential. I some think otherwise, for my part I must needs declare that I have quite different Apprehensions of the thing: and I can but say so till I'm convinced of the contrary. Though it was well meant by this Author, when he designed to commend the Usefulness of Revelation by exposing the defects and flaws of Humane Arts, yet certainly it was nothing to the purpose: for though it be a most excellent Design and Work to extoll and magnify Revealed Religion, especially in the Days we live in, yet it ought to be undertaken and managed in a due and right manner, which this Worthy Writer hath (I conceive) missed of by his vilifying Humane Learning and the industrious abettors of it, in order to the setting up of that Learning which is Divine. And therefore I am of the Opinion that the Gentlemen who in their *Papers and Letters* (which he speaks of) thank'd and applauded him for his Performance, did it with a good and politick Design, namely to invite and encourage so Excellent and Learned a Pen to undertake the defence of the *Necessity of Divine Revelation*, which is so much run down in this Age: not that they thought that this declaiming against the whole Set of Humane Arts can be conducing to this purpose. No: I can't be perswaded that they entertain'd any such Notion: for most assuredly it is not the true and lawful Course to extol Religion by reviling of Arts and Sciences, and the professors of them; to beat down Humane Accomplishments merely to set up Revelation. This is not the right way, I conceive, because these two do not clash with one an other, and therefore may consist

consist together, though the Matter and Subject of them be different. According to my judgment of things, this Writer hath mistaken his Aim, because the vanities, insufficiencies and difficulties of Humane Knowledge do not at all affect the Business of Revelation. If we examine it to the bottom, it will not reach his Design, which is a very excellent one.

Which if this Ingenious Gentleman had been pleas'd to consider, he might have spared part of the Title of his Excellent Treatise, and all the Cise of it, on which he lays so great stress, as you will find in his Preface, where he saith the goodness of the End will atone for the harshness of the means. And besides, he would have shunn'd that dangerous rock of Scepticism and Neutrality, which he seems to make a good Introduction to the belief and embracing of Revel'd Religion. I must plainly tell him that in an other Person this Undertaking, viz. of criticizing and reflecting away all the Arts and Sciences, would have sav'd with some of Affectation of Novelty, of a design to puzzle and perplex Mens Minds, to unhinge and disettle them, to breed distrust and dissatisfaction in them, to teach them to doubt of and quarrel with all things, and to lead them to an ill Disposition of Thoughts, which I will not now call by its plain Name, for the sake of this Ingenious Writer. Others would perhaps spile a dash of Pride and Arrogance in starting so many Scruples and Cavils about this, and that Science, to gratify a little Vanity and Humour, and an ambition of saying something that had not been said before, and much more that had. In pursuance of which he indulges himself in the pleasure and sensuality of finding Faults in others, and of rebuking them for their Folly and Igno-

rance which he finds, or makes in them. But the Integrity of the Author solves all those Surmises, and leaves no room for any such Suspicion or Censure.

And now to shut up these Remarks, I most sincerely declare that I speak nothing of all I have alledged to diminish the just Credit and Reputation of this Learned Man, who hath so laudably appear'd in the World, and hath given a large proof of his Extensive Genius, and dipping into most of the Ingenious Professions and Arts except *Musick*, *Chirurgery*, the study of the *Common-Law*; and except *Arithmetick*, and some other branches of the *Mathematicks*, of which he is wholly silent, though this Science be one of the Chief: but he was aware that there is some *Certainty* in that, and therefore it would not serve his purpose. The Sum is, he hath convers'd with many and good Authors, and in way of Retribution hath been pleas'd to represent them as very bad ones sometimes. But so far as he hath been innocently *frus* with Authors, I approve of it most heartily, and (which is more) I now use his Name and Writings in my own *defence*: for I am sensible that I shall be reckon'd in the number of those who have said some things concerning Authors that may look severely. And truly I am not backward to confess that I have taken the Freedom that other Writers of good Fame have not denied themselves. There is abundant Authority, both antient and modern, as we have seen, for this way of dealing with these whose Writings are made publick. It hath not been thought Indecent by the Wisest Men that have likewise appear'd in publick after them, and even by some in this present Age. I know not why I should not take

this

this Liberty as well as others; or if they had not used that Freedom, I should not be concern'd, for I thought I have prescribed my self Measures, yet I never intend to tie my self up to the imitation of others. I left up just or won b n A
 I's Again, say that I have us'd a Liberty which perhaps will be offensive to some; yet this is to be said that those who take Offence at what I offer, understand not the true Nature of *freedom of the Press*. To say if it be objected that I have been free with Authors of Great Note and Esteem, I answer, These are found failing as well as others; and generally their mistakes are more dangerous, because the Opinion of such Men is catching and infectious. Briefly, I own that I have taken a great deal of Freedom; but it was requisite to do so. For otherwise I could not have pursued my task, that is, I could not have impartially discours'd of *Truth and Error*, which are Subjects that require Free Thoughts, and Free and Open Expressions. The case being thus, I chose rather to displease some Persons than to offend Truth it self. As for the Reformation it self, there may be some things in it that are exceptionable, I doubt not, for I never read any Author yet but I thought I had some reason to demurr to something he said: and therefore I should be very Arrogant if I should pretend to an Exemption here, and think that I have deliver'd nothing that is justly culpable. But I am sure I have been Sincere, and have not betray'd the Cause I undertook. I have Faithfully prosecuted my Argument, and have endeavour'd to set every thing belonging to it in a true light. Nor have I the least Pique, much less any Hatred and Ill Will against those that have oppos'd in the following Papers. I declare

clare I write nothing out of any base and sinister Principle, or out of a love to find fault with other Mens Writings, or because I delight to expose any Mans Principles and Notions. But that which I do, is wholly from a Sense of my Duty in this Affair, to obviate the growing Evils and Mischiefs which are to be dreaded from the bold Doctrines of Atheists, Deists, Scepticks, and Libertines who are so numerous in this Age. Nothing but this could have invited me to this present Undertaking, which is so difficult and hazardous.

I expect Objections and Cavils, because I have met with some already, especially against the *Keennefs* of my Pen. To which my reply is, that they who disgust the Matter, presently are offended at the Manner of Writing. If the Subject be disliked, the Stile cannot escape their Censure. All that I will say further with relation to this matter, is that Generally it may be observ'd that those who dislike any *Smartness* in the refuting of an Adversary, are either *dull* and *heavy* Folks, and cannot affect what is of a different strain from themselves; or they are *Partial* to a Cause, and would have one side only to have an edge, or they are *indifferent* and *unconcern'd*, and don't care that any one Proposition should be urged more than an other, because all are alike to them. Having said this, which is sufficient, I need not spend time in being my own Compurgator. That Man who is conscious to himself of nothing that is base and unworthy, is very Weak if he concerns himself for such idle and impertinent Cavils as some will be starting against him and his Writings. He shews himself to be of a feeble Spirit who troubles his Head about them, for he may easily perceive that they commonly proceed

ceed from *Envy*, which usually haunts those whose Performances are none of the worst. From the impotent Censures of some Men I am more confirm'd than ever that what I have publish'd bears the evident Stamp of *Truth*, for their Snarling at some things that I have offered to the World is a *sufficient* proof of it with intelligent and wise Men.

As for this Particular Treatise, it had its birth from a *Sermon on Truth* which I preach'd before King *Charles the II.* at *Newmarket*, for I was encouraged by some Persons that heard it to enlarge on that Important Subject, that is, to give a particular and distinct account of the *Nature of Truth*, and (which was most desired and deemed most Necessary) to offer the best *Helps for the finding and attaining of Truth*, and to discover the several *Springs and Sources of Error*. These are the main things which this Discourse aims at, and I hope hath in part effected. It was designed to give some Satisfaction to the sincere Enquirers after Truth, and to allay the Disputes and Controversies which are at this day (more then ever) in Religion: and I question not but the Reader will find it some ways serviceable to this great End.

I would likewise acquaint him that this, among the rest, is one of those *Preliminary Discourses* which I design'd should make way for those *Entire Treatises* on the several Heads of Theology, which will compose a *Body of Christian Divinity*. I have already presented the World with some Introductory Volumes, namely on *Difficult Places of Scripture*, on the *Authority, Style, and Perfection of the Old and New Testament*, on the *Proof of God's Existence and Providence from the Structure of the World*, on the *Different Dispensations and Methods of Religion*, &c. And now I thought it requisite to adjoyn this *Discourse of Truth*, because this is necessary in order to my intended Work; for a Man may as well treat of *Light* without supposing the Sun, or some Illuminated Body which is its Vehicle, as discourse of Theological Points without first considering the *Nature of Truth*.

This is all I have to offer to the Reader by way of *Preface*, and so I submit the following Treatise to his impartial Judgment and Censure,

THE

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Free Discourse
OF
Truth and Error.

Chap. I.

Pyrrho and his followers the Scepticks held there is no such thing as Truth. This confuted from the Nature and Frame of Human Souls. From the Nature of God. From Moral Goodness. From the Pretences and Claims to Truth. An Account of the Nature of Truth according to its Different Residence, and its Various Relations and Aspects. The Divine Mind is the Original Fountain of Truth. The false notion of Idea's in God refuted. The true one establish'd. The Divine Ideas are the source and the standard of Truth.

IT was the professed Doctrine of Pyrrho (the first and chief Founder of the Scepticks) that one thing is not more
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likely and probable than an other, that
 * there is no Reason so good for any thing
 but there may be as good a one brought
 against it, and consequently that there is
 no ground of the existence and reality
 of things, and, as the consequence of this,
 that there is no such thing as *Truth* in the
 World. One of his Disciples hath ex-
 press'd it thus in few Words, † " All
 " things are alike indifferent, uncertain
 " and injudicable: therefore neither our
 " Senses nor our Opinions have any thing
 " of Truth or Falshood in them: there-
 " fore we ought to give no credit to these,
 " but to remain altogether free from Opi-
 " nion, Inclination or Motion. And this
 " is that which we must pronounce con-
 " cerning every individual thing in the
 " World, viz. that it hath no more a be-
 " ing then not a being; or it is, and it is
 " not, neither is it not. This was the
 wild Jargon of the *Scepticks*. And *Pyrrho*
 himself was wont declare with great Con-
 fidence that || there is no Truth in any
 thing, but Mens Sentiments and Actions
 are regulated wholly by Law or Custom:
 so

* Παρὶ λόγῳ λόγῳ ἴσῳ ἀνικηταί. Sext. Empir.
 Pyrrhon. Hypoth.

† Τὰ πράγματα ἐπίσης ἀδύνατα, καὶ ἀσάβμητα, καὶ
 ἀνίγκιστα, &c. Aristocles in Euseb. Hb. 14.

|| Ἐπὶ πάντων μηδὲν εἶναι τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, νομα δὲ καὶ ἐθεῖ
 νόμῳ, τὸς ἀνθρώπους πρᾶττεν. ὃ γὰρ μᾶλλον τῷ δὲ ἢ τῷ δὲ
 εἶναι ἐκαστον. Laert. in Pyrrhone.

of Truth and Error.

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so that there is not any one thing to be preferr'd before another, if you consider it in its self. And much more to this effect we may meet with in *Pjurbo's Life*, written by *Laentius*, and in the particular and large Account which *Saxus* the learned *Emperick* hath given the World of this Doctrine. And this mad Notion was not only favour'd by some of old, but even at this day the Disciples of *Hobbs* and *Spinoza*, and other Men of Atheistical Principles look upon *Truth* as an empty and insignificant Word, and they blast it with the reproach of Vain and Groundless, Imaginary and Fictitious, no other then the Lines and Circles made in the Heavens by Astronomers.

But maugre these impotent, but daring Blasphemies of Scepticks and Atheists against *Truth* and God Himself, there is such a thing as *Truth*, and we are as sure of it as of our own Beings. For first, we are ascertain'd of it from the *Nature and Make of Man's Soul*. Secondly, From the Existence of God. Thirdly, From the reality of Moral Goodness; and lastly, from the Common Pretences to *Truth*. First, I say, we are ascertain'd of it from the nature of Humane Souls. To this purpose our *Rational Faculties* were given us, viz: that we might pursue and find out *Truth*: in order to which we are able to examine

Things and Actions, to advise and consult about them, to frame inward Conceptions of them, and to Argue and Discourse of the nature of them. Of all the Creatures on Earth this is the singular and peculiar Prerogative of Man: for seeing Irrational Creatures, as well as Man, are indued with Senses to discern outward and sensible Objects, and oftentimes excel him therein, it was fit that by way of Compensation he should surpass them in some nobler Operation, that is, that he should be exalted above the rank of Brutes in respect of his Understanding and Judging Faculty. Wherefore from the Excellency of our Nature above that of Brutes it is evident that there is such a thing as Truth. The peculiar dignity and perfection of our natural Powers are a proof of the possibility of attaining the knowledge of Things, and the attainment of Truth. These mental Qualifications shew that we were designed for this great End. The addition of these superior Powers makes it evident that there are better Objects to entertain our Minds, and exercise our Understandings. It is plain that these Endowments wherein we excel Brutes, were design'd for some excellent Purposes, such as those Animals were not capable of. For there can be no reason given why we were made with Reason rather than those

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of Truth and Error.

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Creatures, why we are endued with this additional Excellency above our Senses, unless it be this only, that hereby we may be able to enquire into the nature of Things, and to make discoveries concerning them, and so to arrive at *Truth*. The knowledge of this is the Proper Entertainment of Souls, as material Objects are of the External Senses. *Truth* is the genuine food and repast of Humane Minds; it is the Perfection of the Rational Powers of Man: and Error and Ignorance are his Fowlest Blemish and Reproach. If we look into our selves we may observe that *Truth* is That which the Noblest part of our Essence is most enamoured with. Our Souls by their very Make and Complexion pursue it with incredible Eagerness. And therefore it was rightly said of *Plato* (as he is quoted for it by an excellent Person) that * every Soul is unwilling to be deprived of Truth. And a profound Man of an other Sect declares † that the Soul is a lover of Truth, and is never disposed to imbrace what is False; but what appears the contrary it most readily and intirely entertains. To

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which

* Πᾶσα Ψυχὴ ἀκούσασα τερπύται τῆς ἀληθείας. Arian. in Epist. I. 1. c. 28.

† φιλαλήθης ἡ Ψυχὴ ἐξ ἑστέ καὶ τὸ Ψεῦδος ἀναγκα-
στικῶς δεῖται, ἀλλὰ καὶ παντὶ ἀληθεὶ παύσας ἑ
ἑυθὺς. Simplic. in Aristot. lib. 3. de Animā.

which I will adjoyn that of a brave Modern, *Of all the desires that we feel ourselves moved with, there is not any of them more closely interwoven with our Nature than the desire of Truth.* Charon of Wisdom. Book I. chap. 14. Thus from the very Nature and Frame of Man it is evident, that there is such a thing as Truth. He hath Faculties of Understanding and Reason given him to discern and distinguish of things, and he is naturally desirous to exert these Faculties, and thereby to know the true nature of things: And what Man in his wits will believe that it is utterly impossible to exert these Powers aright, seeing they were bestowed upon us to this End, viz. to search into Truth, and know what is True? and therefore we must assert that there is such a thing as Truth, and that we may perceive it and attain to it. For this is certain that Something is to be done with these faculties of Reason and Understanding: otherwise we should have been without them; and we can't imagine any other End of them but this. Which shews that we may come to the knowledge and discovery of what we search for: otherwise these Capacities were made for nothing: and we must grant that these Endowments wherein we surpass Brutes, are of no use at all. But this is such a wild and extravagant Proposition

position that no Man of sense will admit of it. And besides, it would highly reflect on our Maker, who bestowed these Faculties on us, for hence it would follow that he gave them us *to no purpose*, which is unworthy of the Divine Being. If this be true, (for our Adversaries would hold something to be *True*, whilst they are denying all *Truth*: which by the way shews the Absurdity of these Persons) then they make God a very sorry Agent, that is, one that acts to no purpose.

Nay, I will add further, if there no such thing as *Truth*, not only the Faculties are not of any Use to us, but besides that, they are a great Plague and Vexation to us: for dissatisfaction and trouble must needs arise from an Appetite not satisfied. The Soul must needs be very uneasy when our Reason and our Wills are a burden to us, as they cannot but be in this case: for to find and feel within our selves such Powers, and yet never to have them attain their End, or rather to be sensible that they are for no End, must unavoidably prove a torment to the Mind, and render us unhappy. And thus the frame of Humane Beings is far worse than that of Beasts, who generally have their desires and inclinations satisfied.

Secondly, If we establish the notion of a *Deity*, we can not but irrefragably in-

fer that there is *Truth*. For if there be a God, our Faculties must needs be True, because they were given by him who is Truth it self : and consequently the existence of *Truth* is proved. It is against the nature of *God* to implant false notions in the Minds of Men, and thereby to impose upon Mankind, and to deceive and delude the World. If we hold the contrary, we must assert that these Powers and Capacities were given us to lead us into Error and Falshood, nay, and that in the right and due exerting of them we cannot but run into Errors and Mistakes. But he that digests such Propositions as these hath no regard to the perfect Nature of *God*, which is such that he cannot, and will not deceive us, and directly lead us into Error and Falshood. We see then that the Truth of our Faculties is grounded on *God's* Veracity : for if we grant this Divine Attribute, it is impossible that the Faculties of Men should be always impos'd upon, for then we must grant that they were made to be so by *God*. If we did continually err and mistake, and could do no other, it would follow thence that our errors and mistakes are from him who bestowed such Faculties on us as cannot but betray us to falshood and misapprehension. But we are assur'd of the contrary, viz. That Truth
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of Truth and Error.

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is an inseparable perfection of the *Deity*: whence we are certain that God can no more be the cause of Error and Delusion than he is the author of Sin. And consequently the being of Truth is evidenc'd from the Divine Veracity. From all which it is plain that the wild and extravagant Opinion of the *Scepticks*, that there is no *Truth*, or that it is insuperably difficult to attain it, may be confuted from the consideration of the Nature of God, as well as that of Our Selves. For God is most True, and therefore it is repugnant to That Attribute that he should Deceive us, and obtrude upon us Falsity for Truth, or Positively be the Cause of our Errors. Whence it follows that That Faculty of Knowing and Judging which is given us by God is in it self True, and we cannot be Deceived in the knowledge of things, if we use the Means which are serviceable and necessary to conduct us to a Clear Perception of them. The Nature of God is an irrefragable Proof of the being of Truth: as on the contrary, we may conclude that if there be no Truth, there is no God. Those who deny the being of the former must also renounce that of the latter, as well as annul their own Faculties: which gross Absurdities, are a sufficient confutation of these Mens Assertion.

Again,

Again, Thirdly, If there be no *Truth*, then there is no *Goodness*: for all Moral Goodness or Evil is founded in Truth and Falshood. It cant be denied that the Principles of Morality are interwoven with those of Truth: for the same Intrinsic Law of Nature dictates Truth and Goodness. As it flows from the *Understanding*, it is the rule of Truth; but as a Man is indued with *Conscience*, it is the standard of Goodness. Therefore if we take away Truth, we must needs at the same time abolish Virtue. For Virtue is built upon a true Perception. To be good and to be virtuous is to act according to our Reasons and Understandings: for the determination of the Will supposes the information and direction of the Intellect. Wherefore if we do not know what is Virtuous and Vitious, we can't encline to the one, or decline the other. If we can't discern what is good or evil, we can't tell how to practise the former, and avoid the latter. It is impossible the Conscience should be a Monitor and Director to us about any thing to be done or not done, if there be no Truth and Certainty belonging to it, if we cannot discover whether there be a *Difference* between actions; which always supposes that we know the nature of them, for else how can we tell that they differ?

differ? Nay, we have no Obligation on us to act well and wisely, for no Man is obliged to that which is impossible: but it is certain it is impossible to act Virtuously (which is to act well and wisely) when we are not able to know what it is to do so. Nay, if there be no Truth, then nothing is lawful or unlawful, there is nothing praise-worthy and commendable, there is no real turpitude and deformity in any action whatsoever, and consequently there is nothing that calls for regret and repentance. Lying, oppression, murder, and the like have nothing of evil and obliquity in them, and in short, there is no good or evil in the World, or in the nature of things. These are the natural Consequences from the evacuating of Truth: wherefore we must be forced to grant such a thing, if we will avoid all those inconveniences and absurdities: we must own that there is an Intrinsick Verity, as well as Goodness in things.

Fourthly, It is undeniably manifest that Truth is a Reality, because there are so many Pretences and Claims to it: as none would Counterfeit the King's Coin if there were no such thing that was really Current. Even the Greatest Cheats and Impostors, whilst they are Labouring to impose upon us the Grosslest Errors,

rors, at the same time cry up Truth. *Lucian's* two Treatises of *True History* are stuffed with nothing but *Fables*, and *Fictions*. Tho' that Title was given by him in a Jestling way, yet Others are Serious and Downright: thus *Celsus* called his Book which was a Cursed Invektive against the Christian Religion the *Word of Truth*: and the Title of *Hierocles's* Virulent Oration against the Christians, was *Philalethes*. *Volkelius's* Book which is fraught with very false and deceitful Principles is entitul'd by him *De Vera Religione*. Thus even whilst Men oppose and deny the *Truth*, they under-hand confess it: whilst they pretend to baffle the greatest Realities, they suppose something to be True, and thence it is that they offer their own Inventions for such. Therefore we have no reason to attend to the impudent Cavils of Atheistical Spirits, who tell us that *Truth* hath no real existence, but is beholding to Mens particular fancies for its Being.

Having thus clear'd the way, I will now proceed, and that in this following method, 1. I will briefly enquire into the *Nature of Truth*. 2. I will direct you to the *Head and Fountain* of it. 3. I will shew what are the *Chanel*s in which it streams down to us from that *Fountain*. 4. What it is that *stops and damms* up the current

current of Truth, 5. What it is that gives its streams a free passage.

I. Having asserted the *Existence*, I come to display the *Nature* of *Truth*, and that with the like brevity. I am not of that * Noble Personage's Mind that none ever yet gave a right Definition of Truth: though truly he hath himself written so intricately of it that 'tis hard for the Reader to tell whether he hath given any Definition of it or no, or whether it be right or wrong. This is a subject that hath been sometimes intangled and perplexed by those who have handled it, as if they were afraid to have *Truth* seen and known. But I will carefully endeavour to avoid this fault (whatever others I shall be guilty of) by waving all elaborate niceties, and by offering a Plain and Rational Account of this Matter. And I think I cannot more advantageously represent it to you then by considering it according to its *Different Situation* in us.

We must know then that, first of all, there is *Truth* in our *Judgments* and *Apprehensions*, viz. when these are agreeable to the nature of those Things which our Enquiry is conversant about: and this is opposed properly to *Erroneous* and *False Conceptions*. There is also *Truth* in our *Wills*.

* Lord Herbert.

Will and Affections, and That is no other then Sincerity, Faithfulness and Integrity of Heart, being called by the Psalmist, *Truth in the inward parts*, Psal. 51. 16, and it is opposed to Inward *Hypocrisy* and *Disimulation*. *Truth* likewise is seated in the *Tongue*, and discovers it self in our Words and Discourses. This is call'd by the Schools *Logical Truth*, viz. when our Words agree with the Things, when we Speak things as they Really Are. There is That also which is call'd *Ethical*, or *Moral Truth*; but That is *Veracity* rather than *Verity*. It is when our Words are according to our Thoughts and Perswasions, when our Speeches agree with our Conceptions and Understandings, and with our Hearty Intentions and Designs, and therefore is called by the said Royal Prophet *Speaking the Truth in the Heart*, Psal. 15. 2. and it is directly Opposed to *Lying*. There is *Truth* also in our *Actions*, *Lives* and *Practises*, and This is Plain Dealing, Simplicity and Honesty of Conversation, in Opposition to Outward Hypocrisy and Dissembling. And particularly, the Impartial Executing of Justice and Righteousness is frequently stiled *Truth*, and the *Judgment of Truth* more then once in the *Old Testament*.

According to this Account which I have given, *Truth* may seem to resemble the

the Main *Ocean*, which though in it self it be but One and Entire, yet it assumes *Several Names* according to the Various Regions it passeth by, and the Different Shores it washeth: so *Truth* according to the different places of its residence and converse, according to its different relations and habitudes is variously denominated. But the First of These, *viz. Truth in our Understandings and Judgments* is the Primary and most Genuine Notion of *Truth*: and as This Influenceth upon the Other Faculties and Parts of Man, so, and no otherwise it is said to be Seated in Them. *Truth* most properly is something which we harbour in our Understandings, something that we Conceive and Apprehend: And this Conception containeth in it the Notions of All Beings and Objects in Nature, of what kind and quality soever: but it comes under Our Cognisance at present chiefly only as it respects *Religion*, as it refers to Moral, but especially Theological and Divine Verities; such are the Nature of God, and his Attributes, the Knowledge of his Worship, and all the Necessary Articles of our Belief, and the Main Instances of our Duty. And to Distinguish This from the Other kinds of *Truth* before named, I may call it the *Truth of Doctrine*, and particularly the *Doctrine of Religion*. (But yet I do
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not so confine my self in this present Undertaking that I shall not, as there shall be occasion, treat of Doctrines belonging to any of the *Arts and Sciences*, to *Natural Philosophy*, and *Politicks*, &c. though I chiefly and principally make Religion my Subject.) But this must be added, that the *Truth of Doctrine* necessarily implieth and supposeth a *Truth of Things* : as, if you look back upon Those several Ranks of Truth already mentioned, you will find that they all depend upon the Truth of Things themselves. Truth in *Words* is that Consent which ought to be between the Discourse and the Matter it self treated of. Truth in the *Heart* and *Affections* is when our Minds are Inwardly Affected accordingly as the Things really are. Truth in our *Lives* and *Manners* is when our Actions hold correspondence with our Words and Professions, which Words depend upon the Things themselves. And Truth in the *Understanding* is when that Faculty is conformable to the True Nature of Things : for then I have a True Notion of any thing when my Conceptions agree with the Thing it self : as on the contrary, my Notion is False and Erroneous when they disagree, and represent not Things as they Are. Whence we may gather that it is a very lame Definition of *Truth* which

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* One hath given, that it is the *joyning or separating of Words in Propositions, as the Ideas they stand for agree or disagree in Mens Minds.* This makes Truth to be only a conformity of Words to Mens Conceptions of things, but Mens Conceptions may be Erroneous, and how then can that Agreement produce Truth? It is certain it cannot do it at all, for Truth of what kind so ever consists in its Conformity to the Things Themselves, and is to be Measured by the Nature of them. But this is more especially true of this *Doctrinal Truth* which I am now particularly to treat of. You may certainly know it by its Exact Conformity to the matters themselves. When our Understandings and Judgments apprehend these according to the true nature of them, when we conceive of them as they really are in themselves, then and not till then we have True Conceptions of them. This is a short account of the *Nature of Truth.* But if you would know when it is that your Conceptions and the Things themselves agree and exactly answer to each other, whereby you may be assured that you are in possession of Truth, you must stay till we come to speak (in order) of the Third General Head which I propounded

* J. Lock's Essay of Human Understanding. Book 4. Ch. 5.

pounded. This that I have said shall suffice not only for a general discovery of the nature of Truth, but for a particular account of the different species of it.

II. The next thing I undertook was to point at the *Source and Fountain of Truth*: where we shall likewise further display the *Nature* of it. Now, it is Confessed, that All things had their Original from *God*, and thence therefore it is that we must fetch the *True Nature* of them. Though by a *General Corruption and Depravation* Truth should be Lost upon Earth, yet it remains *Uncorrupted and Unaltered* in Heaven. In Those *Eternal Registeries* are laid up the *Records of Truth*. For though the *Divine and Heavenly Being*, who gave *Existence* to all things that are, and invested them with their *Particular Natures and Properties*, hath firmly established the *Truth*, and fixed the *Reality* of them, viz. by giving them their *Peculiar Beings and Individual Natures*, and by his making them *Such*, and no *Other*, yet even before they were brought into *Existence*, and were *Actuated* with their *Proper Nature*, they were from *Eternity Conceived and Framed* in the *Divine Mind*, That fruitfull *Womb and Treasury of Truth*. There were in *God Essential and Eternal Ideas* of All things which were afterwards to be *Created*

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ated and Accomplish'd: according to these Ideas or Images, which were as it were set before him, he formed, he ordered all things. This was an old *Jewish* Notion (as Dr. *Cudworth* and some other Learned Writers acquaints us) that all things in this inferiour World had a *root* above, from whence they sprang, or a *Seal* (as they sometimes call it) by which they were shaped and stamp'd. This also the Wisest and Profoundest among the *Gentiles* had a sense of. Accordingly *Plato* speaks of *Idea's* which were the *EXEMPLARS* of all things that were Made, and he asserts that when God created all things he looked upon these *Idea's* as so many Copies to follow and act by: but he seems sometimes to place these Exemplary Forms out of God, not within him. Otherwise the Notion was Sound and Rational, and is no other then This, that there were in God certain Original Representations of all things, and that according to these he framed the World and produced the Universe, and that these Ideas or Reasons were Always, with God the same. Thus *Seneca* * represents *Plato's* Opinion of *Idea's*, that they are the Eternal Patterns of all things

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* *Idea est eorum, quae naturae sunt, Exemplar aeternum: Epist. 58.*

which are formed, such an Universal Reason or Platform as is in the Mind of an Artificer by which he shapes and contrives his Work.

This, I say, I take to be a very sound Notion; but it hath been perverted, and made use of to ill purposes by some *Platonists* of old, who made these *Idea's* the Medium of the Divine Vision. And some Schoolmen had such a notion as this when they talk'd of the *Speculum Deitatis*, the Glass in which the Saints see God. * Some fancifull Men of late have endeavour'd to prove that we see and know all things in God by these *Idea's*, and that all our Knowledge is after this manner. The known Author of the *Search after Truth* hath a whole Chapter (*viz.* the Sixth of his Third Book) about this, but it is very Obscure, and founded on his own Imagination, which yet is a thing he much blames others for. This is likewise the Opinion of an Ingenious Writer of our own, a Person of a very Platonick Spirit, who asserts that these *Idea's* which are in God, are those by which we see and perceive things, and discern the Truth of them. † *The Divine No. 9.* saith he, or *Ideal World is presentiated to our Souls, wherein*

* Mr. Du Hamel. Mr. Malebranche.

† Mr. Norris of Reason and Religion.

wherein we see and perceive all things. Nay, he tells us, that all Sensible Objects whatsoever are seen and perceived in this way. He is at this Notion again in a late Treatise, where he avows it to be most certain that the immediate Objects of our Understandings are no other then the Ideas of the Divine Intellect, in which we see and contemplate all things. Nay, these Ideas which are but in order to Truth are by this Author asserted to be Truth it self: and he proceeds yet further, and makes Doctrinal Truth the same with the Divine Nature: so high doth this Platonist fly that he defies Truth; it is identified with the Divine Substance or God himself, saith he. But how then could this Learned Writer in an † other place undertake to prove a God from the Nature of Truth, if they be the very same? These are the ill results of that precarious Notion, that we see all things immediately in the Divine Ideas. This is the Mode of Understanding of things, saith he: and truly it is to be admired that a Man of such Exact Reason as he shews himself to be Master of at other times, should take up such an Enthusiastick and groundless Notion as this. But thus far we own Ideas, that

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* Account of Reason and Faith.

† Metaphysical Essay.

they had an Eternal Existence in God, and that he made all the species of things that are in the World according to these Platforms or Models in his own Mind. Therefore Plato rightly calls them * *the Measures of all things that Exist*, and they are stiled by another † *the Predeterminations and Willings of God concerning the things that he intended to make*. Farther, we own these *Ideas*, these Eternal Paterns of all things, these immutable Figures and Archetypes in the Divine Intellect to be the first and original standard of Truth. For all things that are made by God and derived from him do partake of something in him, *i. e.* they answer to that first Model and Image of them in the Divine Intellect. And all these things are what they are, and are Real and True, because this their particular Existence and Nature were derived from that Eternal Source, and because they agree with it.

Therefore observe the necessity of adjoyning this to what was said before: I grounded the Notion of *Truth* on the Agreeableness of our Conceptions with the Things themselves which we form Conceptions of: but then moreover we must

* Τῶν ὄντων μέτρα. Plat. in Timæo, in Parmenide, in lib. de Repub.

† Προορισματα καὶ θελήματα τοῦ θεοῦ. Dionys. Areopag.

must remember that the Things themselves have their Agreeableness also with the First Paterns (and if I may so speak, the Conceptions) of them in God. He thereby fixed their individual Nature, and made them to be what they particularly are : so that when we enquire why and how things are *True*, we must not only give an account of the *Truth* of them from our Apprehensions being adjusted to them, but also from their Similitude and Agreeableness with the *Idea* in God's Mind. As our Apprehensions must answer to the Things, so the Things themselves must accord with the Primitive Pourtraiture of them in God. All things so far as they answer to these are *True*, and so far as they disagree with them are *False*. This then is the thing which we assert, that things are therefore *True* because they are conformable to That First Draught and Scheme of all things in the Divine Mind, because they are agreeable to That Primitive Delineation and Image, that Original Idea and Model : as it is a *True Balance* and a *True Measure* which agrees with the *Standard*, it is a *True Copy* which answers *Exactly* to the Original. All Truth ought to be adjusted to the First and Only Measure of Truth, *i. e.* the Supreme and most Perfect Understanding of God, who is the

Father of Lights, the Original and Archetypal Truth, the Uncreated and Essential Verity. Therefore it seems to be unwarily and groundlessly said by a very Excellent and Learned Man, that ** neither the Divine Understanding nor Will is the fountain of the Truth of things.* I conceive this is an oversight, because the Wisdom of God is the Prime Rule of Truth, and all Truth hath its very Being from This Supreme Truth founded on the Immortal and Immutable Nature and Mind of God. And thus I have traced it to its very Spring-Head, and shew'd you that this Pure Light is derived from God Himself, and is of Divine Extract, and is the Daughter of Heaven. And certainly it is a Good Advantage towards the attaining of a right Notion of *Truth* to be acquainted with its First Source and Original.

But what availeth it to know that the Standard of Truth is Above, unless we knew likewise how to have it Derived to us here Below? How shall we be able to draw the Lines from that Unbounded Center? How shall those Eternal Reasons of things which are treasured up in the Divine Nature be Dispensed forth to us? Who shall go up for

* Bishop Rusts Discourse of Truth.

for us to Heaven, and bring down Truth to us? Let us not be Solicitous about this matter, but assure our selves that the Truth is very Nigh unto us, in our Minds and in our Hearts.

OUR IIVES. These are : They are pressed from Rome. I. C. I. A. I. S. What Writers have main- tained the contrary : These Ideas proceed from the Nature of Humane Souls : They are not always actually created. From the Abstract Nature of them it is proved that they were planted in us from our Birth. This is also evident from their Universal Reception. An Objection against this asserted. Jews, Gentiles, Christians unanimously acknowledge the Ideas. Truth is conveyed to us not only by these Inward Notions, but by Deducti- ons from them, and from Sense. In our Abstracting from Sense is justifying a help to Truth. Anchovy or Humane Testimony is another Assistance of Truth. A brief Recapitulation of the whole.

III. Therefore let us take notice of our Conscience wherein Truth is con- veyed to us from the Fountain of And now the two Reason and Sense are joined before that Truth consists in the conformity of our Understanding to the things themselves which are the Objects of our Understanding. And now I shall

CHAP. II.

There are INNATE IDEAS of Truth in our selves, as well as in Gods. What these are : They are proved from Rom. 12. 14, 15. What Writers have maintain'd the contrary : These Ideas proved from the Nature of Humane Souls. They are not always actually exerted. From the Abstract Nature of them it is proved that they were planted in us from our Birth. This is also evinc'd from their Universal Reception. An Objection against this answered. Jews, Gentiles, Christians unanimously acknowledge these Ideas. Truth is convey'd to us not only by these Inbred Notions, but by Deductions from them, and from Sense. Yet our Abstracting from Sense is sometimes a help to Truth. Authority or Humane Testimony is an other Medium of Truth. A brief Recapitulation of the Whole.

III. **T** Herefore let us take notice of the Channells wherein Truth is convey'd to us from the Fountain. And They are These two, *Reason* and *Scripture*. I had asserted before that Truth consists in the conformity of our Understandings to the things themselves which are the Objects of our Understanding. And now I assert that

that we have no other way to know and be assured of this Conformity then by the Conduct of Right Reason which is given us by God for this very purpose, and by the guidance of those Inspired Writings which are superadded to our Reason. To begin with the first of these, I take *Reason* here in a very *Large* Sense, for I understand by it. 1. *Innate Notions*. 2. *Discourse and Argumentation*, with all the *Means* and *Assistances* which we make use of in our reasoning and discoursing.

First, I say, there are certain *Innate Notions* and *Conceptions* in our Minds which convey *Truth* to us. For this is certain there are two sorts of *Ideas* which we are to take notice of in our search after *Truth*, *Ideas* in God, and *Ideas* in our selves. The former made things to be True, the latter convey the notice of the Truth of them to us: the one from Eternity doth constitute, the other in time discovers *Truth* to us. It is of these latter *Ideas* that I am now to speak, and to demonstrate the real Existence of them. We must know then that though *Truth* be Radically and Primarily seated in the Divine Understanding, yet it is Derivatively and Secondarily in Ours. Though the Original Pattern of it be in God, yet He hath Copied it out into the Mind of Man, and hath imprinted the Figure of it.

it on his Rational Nature. Humane Souls created after God's Image do in some manner contain in them This Transcript and Resemblance. There are in our Minds Natural Impressions and Inbred Notices of True and False, which are as it were Streams issuing forth from the Uncreated and Everlasting Spring of Truth. And these Notions are not Indifferent and Arbitrary, but Fixed and Indelible; they being derived to us from That Immutable and Essential Truth.

If you particularly ask *what* these First Principles or Ideas are, I answer, they are of different sorts, for some are barely Speculative, as that, What is not cannot be known, that Nothing can't possibly have any qualities or affections, that a thing can't act without Existence, that an Effect supposes a Cause, that a thing cannot be and not be at the same time, that nothing can be both present and absent from the same Subject at once, that the whole is bigger than its part. These Notions are assented to without the help of Ratiocination, without the least study, or dispute, or making of Deductions, or framing of Consequences; which proves them to be *Innate Ideas*. If there were not these and the like Principles in Mens Nature, there could be no Arts and Sciences, and we could attain to no Truth,

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no Certainty of things. God therefore hath planted them in our Nature because we have continual use of them. * *Des Cartes* reckons among these Intrinsic Principles such as these, What is True, what is *Thinking*, and he proves that the Ideas of God and of the Soul are home-born, that is, the general image or understanding of them is naturally bred with us. Others are more then *Speculative*, as having an immediate tendency to Practice, and refer directly to a Religious Life, as the Notion of Gods making and governing the World in a wise and orderly manner, the certainty of Rewards and Punishments according to the good or evil Men do, the intrinsic bounty of just and virtuous Actions, the inseparable pleasure and satisfaction of Righteousness and Charity, and of all other Exertments of Virtue. Other Principles of Practical Truth are such as these, that we ought to venerate, love, serve and worship the Supreme Being, the Almighty Creator, and Merciful Preserver of all things, that we must honour and obey our Parents, that we must not injure and harm any Person, but render to every Man his due, that we ought to deport our selves towards others as we desire
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and expect they should act towards us: that we ought to love, respect and shew our selves grateful to those from whom we receive kindnesses. These and other Natural Sentiments and Moral Principles, which are the basis of all Laws that respect the Moral Actions of Men, are those *Ideas* we speak of, which every Rational Person agrees to without any help of Arguing. There is born with every Man, although corrupted by *Adam's Fall*, a notion of the truth of these Propositions; and these are necessary in order to a religious and virtuous Practise. To which purpose the Learned and Judicious Dr. *Whichcot* hath said rightly, * *Had there not been a Law written in the heart of Man, a Law without him had been to no purpose: for had we not principles that are concreated, i. e. did we not know something, no Man could prove any thing, for he that knows nothing, grants nothing.* Thus Truth is convey'd to us by Connatural Principles and Impressions, Ideas and Conceptions, or (as the forenamed Author calls them) Truths of first inscription.

If the Great Doctor of the Gentiles be of any account with us, we may be confirmed in this matter, by what he hath plainly delivered, *Rom. 12. 14, 15. The Gentiles*

* Sermon on John 7. 46.

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*things do by Nature, (i. e. by virtue of this Light in their Minds) the things contained in the Law, viz. the Moral Law; and on that score may be said to be a Law unto themselves. And it must needs be so because the work of the Law is written in their Hearts, namely in these Original Characters and Common Notices of good and evil engraven on their Consciences. So the famous Melancthon on this place, * This which St. Paul saith here, [the work of the Law written in their Hearts] signifies that these natural notions are gifts to be ascribed to Nature, and are even born with us. Though a late Author endeavours to distort this part of the Apostle's words, and explains the Law written in the Heart by Dent. 6. 6. these words shall be in thy Heart, i. e. they were to be entertain'd in their Minds and Thoughts, and esteemed and loved. Whereas it is evident to any unprejudiced Person, that the Law written in the Heart is to be understood here of that Law which is implanted in their Natures, and originally imprinted in their Hearts from their birth. It is manifest from the Context that the Apostle's meaning is, that the same Truths*
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* Quod inquit Paulus, *opus scriptum in cordibus*, significat has notitias naturales dona esse attributa naturæ, & nobiscum nascantia.

and Duties which are commanded by the Moral Law or Decalogue, are primitively engraven on their Consciences: whence proceed those Reflections which they make, and cannot but make on their Actions, as it follows, *Their Consciences bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another*: which are still farther demonstrations of these Inbred Notions which are written in their Hearts. He proves the existence and reality of these Inherent Signatures and Impresses of Truth and Goodness on the Soul from the office and known acts of Conscience, namely *accusing or excusing*, that is, its checking or applauding them according as their Actions are. Whence is this, in those Gentiles, but from those imprinted Characters in the Mind and Conscience which I'm speaking of? Wherefore I look upon those Words of the Apostle as an unanswerable place for these Innate Principles of Truth. He assures us that the Minds of Pagans are stock'd with inbred notions of Morality, that these are *written and engraven on their Hearts*, that is, their very Thoughts and Consciences bear the natural impress of these Excellent Ideas. This is that Congenite Light which is set up in every rational Creature: these are those Conceptions that are riveted into the very essence

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fence and specifick nature of Man. This is that which we came into the World with, and which we drew in with our first Breath: and these are those Notions which through the whole time of our lives are present and familiar with us, and which we with great freedom (if we be not otherwise bound and enslaved) own and acknowledge. Though a Man should go to work, as *Des Cartes* did in Natural Philosophy, that is, though he should strip himself of all Sentiments and Apprehensions taken from the Authority of others, from Education, Custom, &c. yet these Ideas I'm discoursing of would remain after all, and can't possibly be laid aside, for they are of the very Nature of Man. These can't be expung'd out of Mens Hearts because they are part of God's *Image*, according to which they were made: and so are an indelible stamp of the Divinity on Mens Souls. These are emanations and rays from that Glorious Sun; they are no less then imitations of the Eternal Ideas in the Divine Mind. And therefore, though the Platonists doctrine of *Ideas* was mix'd with some fond and groundless Fancies, they founding them on the Præexistence of Souls, and the knowledge they had of things in that State, yet (abstracting from such Con- ceits) the Account of *Ideas* as I have re-

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presented it, is firm and solid; and it is not to be doubted that these Ideas are the Fundamental grounds of Knowledge, and Right Apprehensions of things. There was good reason therefore why I should assert these to be *One Chancel of Truth*.

I know this Doctrine hath met with Opposition from several Hands. Socinus, though a great Pretender to Rational Discoveries, stiffly asserts that no Man by the Insite light of Nature hath any knowledge of a God. He expressly tells us that ** the Notion of him is not written in Mens Hearts by Nature; there are no such Innate Principles in Mens Breasts, whereby they can by the use of Reason come to the knowledge of the Supreme Being.* Our Learned Country Man, Bishop Pearson was of the Opinion that † *the Soul of Man hath no connatural knowledge at all, but is at first like a fair smooth Table-Book without any Characters written in it.* A late Learned Writer who had a fair occasion to assert these innate notions of Morality, willfully balks them, and yet at the same time grants, || *that it is not impossible that these Moral Notices should be born with us.* I wonder that a Man of so good Sense should

* Prelect. cap. 2.

† On the first Article of the Creed.

|| De Legibus Naturæ.

should speak so faintly, and so much as doubt of the Reality of them. An * Other denies all Innate Impressions of the Mind, and holds that *Experimental Observation* is the standard of Truth, as well as of Goodness. But this singular Opinion is easily baffled from this Consideration, that a great many things which are the objects of knowledge admit not of Experiments. Or, if we could suppose that they did, yet according to this Gentleman we must make a great many Experiments before we can come to the knowledge of Truth or Goodness; and in the mean time we may indulge any Erroneous Notion, or Vicious Practice. There are no Innate Speculative Principles, there are no Nations Naturally imprinted on the Understanding, saith the Author of the *Essay of Humane Understanding*, Book 1. Chap. 2. and labours to render his Opinion plausible. An Other because he had nothing else to say against these Mental Notices, and Innate Characters of Truth, explodes them as an † *old School-Notion*, forgetting in the mean time that it was an old Maxim of the Schools, derived from Aristotle and the Old Philosophy, that there is nothing in the Understanding of

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Man

* Dr. Parker, in his Account of Platonick Philosophy.

† Dr. Nichols Confer. with a Theist, part 2.

Man which was not first in the Senses. Is it not somewhat strange that those Men who have cashier'd *Aristotle*, should adhere to one of his most darling Notions, namely that knowledge is convey'd to the Mind by the External Senses only, and that the Soul of it self is a mere Blank, and whatever is written in it afterwards comes from and through the Senses?

To wipe off all these Suggestions and Cavils, and to maintain and support the credit of the *Ingraffed Notions* of Truth in all Men, I will prove them first from the nature of the Soul, which is a *Thinking Being*: secondly, from the *Abstract and Immaterial nature* of some of them: thirdly, from their *general and universal Reception*. The first Argument I offer is taken from the nature of Humane Souls, which are Thinking Beings. This hath gain'd the assent and approbation of the far greatest part of the Learned World, and all Men of good Sense acquiesce in this Notion. And indeed they cannot do otherwise, for there is no better account given of the Nature of the Soul: at least this Property of *Thinking* is the most considerable of all that we can attribute to the Soul. If this then be a Thinking Being by its Essence, then Thoughts and Ideas of things are Innate, for it cannot be of the Essence of the Soul

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to Think, and not to have Thoughts and Conceptions : and we cannot imagine these Conceptions to be essential and natural to it, and yet to be seperated from it. Now, if they be inseperable, we must be forced to acknowledge that they were in the Soul at its first make, and that they always are in it, for the Soul cannot be without that which is Essential to it. Souls then being Rational Thinking Beings, and consequently the Souls even of Infants being such (for though the bodily organs hinder or promote the Sensible Operation and Actual exerting of this Faculty, yet the Faculty is the same) it follows that they have naturally such Rational Principles in them, and that they cannot be divested of them. That all Men were born with these Ideas, and had them even in the State of Infancy and Childhood appears from this, that at the *first* * asking them about them, or at the very *first proposal* of the General Principles of Truth to them, when they come to any maturity of years, and make use of Speech, they freely give their assent to them, and acknowledge them for Truth. This is an Argument that the Soul was no Stranger to these things before, but had

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them

* Κοινὰ δὲ αἰσιν ἔννοιαι ὅσαι πάντες ἄνθρωποι ἐκείνη-
 ντες ὁμολογῶσιν. Sallust. de Diis,

them originally imprinted upon its Faculties. This shews that these are not new-acquired Notions and Representations of things, but that they were guests from the beginning, that these Images of Truth were seated in their Minds from their Nativity. This is an absolute Mark of an Innate Principle that it is acknowledged by us as soon as it is alledg'd: we call for no farther discourse or proof of the truth or goodness of it, but we give assent to it without demurr, as soon as we hear it. The Understanding and Will, immediately upon its being propounded, entertains it without any deliberation.

I do not assert that these *Innate Ideas* are so naturally planted in our Souls that we have the *Use* of them Presently. It is indeed non-sense to think such a thing, and all the World might confute it with ease, for it is a considerable time before we have the actual use of these Original Notions in our Minds. But it is ridiculous to say they are not there because they are not actually exerted, for on the same ground it might be proved that a Man hath no Rational Soul for several Years, because the Faculties of it do not exert themselves. *Reason* is the natural Privilege and Endowment of Man, as he is Man: he is born a Rational Creature, but yet he is not able to shew it a considerable

derable time. The like may as truly be said of these Ideas I'm speaking of, every rational Mind is adorn'd and embellish'd with them from the beginning, but they do not presently discover themselves: for a Man's Soul cannot make use of these Mental Impressions till the Body, the Soul's Vehicle and Instrument, be fitted. He must take some time to act the Man, to exert his Thinking Faculty; otherwise these Ideas will not be discovered. Wherefore I do not say they are Actually known from a Man's Birth, But I say they are imbraced and assented to as soon as he begins to act his Reason. For generally it is that by an orderly Reflection and Be-thinking our selves, and by a brisk exercising of Reason we bring them into *Adi-on*: for though these Principles were in the Soul antecedently to all Ratiocination, yet they spring up anew, and shew themselves more vigorously at such a time. They are not begot, but they are excited and improved by Thoughtfulness and Reasoning, having been before lodg'd in our reasonable Nature. These Mental Impressions must needs be in us from our Nativity because they are part of our Natural Frame as we are Rational Thinking Beings, and as we resemble the Divinity, and are made according to his *Image*, as was said before. Hence we naturally fall

into these Apprehensions when occasion is given us. Our Minds and Understandings are of such a Make that whenever such Propositions are tendred to us we freely imbrace them, and yield our assent to them. This is that which I mean by *Ideas*. These First Truths are assented to at the first view because of the natural frame and tendency of Mens Minds which have an exact correspondence with and conformity to these Maxims. God hath made our Souls to suit with these Principles by a certain necessity of Nature; so that we cannot but allow of them, and subscribe to the goodness of them: or if at any time we refuse to do so, we afterwards find a Check and Regret in us for doing it. This then is my first Ground I go upon, the Soul of Man is a Cogitative Being, and these *Ideas* of Truth are the first Emanations of that Being. Every Humane Soul is furnish'd with a stock of these First Principles: and therefore he that denies these destroys the very Nature of Humane Souls.

Secondly, I prove the Existence of these *Innate Ideas* from this, *viz.* that many of them are Representations of those things which have no dependence upon Matter and Outward Objects, but are purely Speculative and Spiritual: of which sort some of those were that I have already mention'd

tion'd. Wherefore I gather thence that they are Principles born with us. The Soul hath General and Abstract notions of things, as is confess'd by all Persons; and if any one should venture to deny it, we can confute him by our own Experience, for we have Universal Speculations, Logical and Mathematical Notions, *i. e.* Ideas of things for which we are not at all beholding to our Bodily Senses and Eternal Objects. The General Inferences and Deductions which we make from Individuals, the Universal Propositions which we raise from Particulars, the Abstract and Metaphysical Notions which we are able to frame in our Minds, and which we daily frame, are of such a refined Nature that they could not be made out of Material Objects. They cannot be *refined and drawn off*, as * One well saith *from the Sensible Resemblances and Species of things*. The reason is because they have no affinity with or relation to Sense. Wherefore their original must be from what is Spiritual and Immaterial; and what is that but the Soul? Or, if you say they are from God, you do but assert the same thing, for God placed them in the Soul of Man, and none else. He created the Soul with them, and made them the in-

* Animadvers. on Dr. Sh.

inseparable gift of all Humane Souls. This is certain that seeing these Images could not be received by the Senses, seeing there is nothing External to form them, it undeniably follows that they are Natural Impressions or Images. Wherefore the elaborate attempts of a late * Author are to small purpose, whilst he endeavours to perswade his Readers that a Man doth not bring these Ideas of Truth into the World with him, that they are not planted in his Soul as soon as it is created, but that all Ideas come either by *Sensation* or *Reflection*. And with him an † other late Writer agrees, and strives by the like methods to run down all Inbred Notions of Truth and Morality, pretending to prove that all Ideas come by *Argumentation* or *Sense*. That they are not all by the former I have before evidenced from the nature of Mens Souls: and that they depend not wholly on the latter I have now made good from the quality of these *Ideas* themselves, and of the *Objects* which they give us a representation of. If these Notions had any affinity with Material and Mundane Objects, then indeed we might infer that they were borrowed from these, but when it is clear that these are quite of another

* Mr. Lock, of Humane Understanding.

† Mr. Le Clerc. Pneumatolog. cap. 5. *ArbaminA*

other Nature, we have reason to believe that they arise not from Corporeal Objects or Images, but from the Soul it self, which is Incorporeal. I take this to be a very Good Argument, and I do not see that any Objection of weight can be brought against it, though I foresee that a Person who hath a mind to cavil and raise disputes may say something against it: but so he may against any thing that is propounded. But this is plain and unquestionable in my Judgment, if the Ideas be not borrow'd from without, they are undoubtedly from within, namely from the Essential Nature of Humane Souls with which they were at first created. This absolutely proves that those Spiritual Immaterial Ideas were lodg'd in the Mind ever since its Existence.

Thirdly, I prove these Innate Principles from their general reception and universal prevailing in the World. If they were not congenite, if they were not originally fixed in the Nature of Man, as he is Man, they would never have got that footing among the generality of Mankind which we see they have. If they were wholly from without, and depended on External Mediums, or were founded in mere education or custom, they would not have held out so long a time, they would not have prevail'd in all times and places,

as we cannot but observe they do. All Men agree in these first and natural Truths, and imbrace these Maxims and Propositions. Of these that Antient Sage is to be understood who tells us that there is something that is * *every where lawful*. And the same Person acquaints us that it was fully agreed upon by *Socrates* and *Hippias*, that there are certain † *unwritten Laws established in all places alike*. There is a Common and Universal Law of Nature which dictates in all Men and at all times that such things are just and good, and that others are of a contrary quality, that the former are to be done, and the latter to be avoided. There are such things as are right and wrong, honest and dishonest in the esteem of all Mankind, and by the consent of all Nations and People. Lying, Theft, Murder, &c. are Vices in the judgment of all Persons throughout the Universe: the Notions are immovable and eternal, and it is impossible to erase them out of Mens Consciences. Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, Christians and all Nations of whatever Perswasion agree in these, though as to external Rites and Ceremonies of Religion they exceedingly differ,

* Πανταχῦ νόμιμον. Xenoph. Memorab. l. 4.

† Ἀγράτοι νόμοι ἐν παντί καὶ κατὰ πάντα τοὺς χρόνους. Ibid.

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differ, and will by no means be brought to a Conformity. They all conspire in the Notion of Virtue and Vice in general (abstracting altogether from Reveald Religion) they all meet in this Grand Point; here they unite, though otherwise they are divided. Here I say they *unite*, viz. in the Common Precepts of Nature, though there be some disagreement as to some very Particular Precepts of this Law, or rather some particular Conclusions deduced from it and the General Maxims of Morality. But these first and general and most Material Principles of Morality are universally agreed on: the Main and Essential Laws of Good and Evil are not disputed.

Under this Head I might add the general practise of all Civilized Nations, which is to reward Virtue and punish Vice: and accordingly there are Publick Edicts sent forth to put this in Execution. This shews that it is the apprehension of Mankind that Vice is an evil thing, and that Virtue is the contrary: else the one would not deserve a Penalty, and the other a Reward. To this purpose I meet with an Excellent Passage in a late Worthy and Judicious Writer, one who is a Great Asserter of the Intrinsick Goodness of Religion. "It is a thing observable,

* Judg Hale of Humility.

"saith he, that though the generality of
 "Mankind abound with Pride, Intem-
 "perance, Injustice, and almost all kind
 "of Vicious Dispositions; yea; though
 "the best of Men are not without irrup-
 "tions of some of these Distempers; and
 "though it must needs be that where
 "there is the greatest number, there is
 "the greatest External Force, either to
 "make such Laws as they please, or to
 "make such Governours as may be suita-
 "ble to their Disposition: yet it is rare
 "and a very prodigy to find any Nation
 "to make Laws in favour of Pride, Am-
 "bition, Intemperance, Luxury, Oppres-
 "sion, Violence, Injustice, &c. or to choose
 "such Magistrates or Governours (where
 "it is in their Choice) as are apparent-
 "ly inclinable to those Vices: but in their
 "Choice of Laws they choose such as
 "may rather suppress those Vices; and
 "maintain and encourage Sobriety, Hu-
 "mility, Meekness, Beneficence as things
 "most convenient to Humane Society;
 "and in their choice of Governours they
 "rather commit the trust of themselves,
 "Estates and Properties to those Hands
 "that they find sober, temperate, drum-
 "ble, just, than those that are loose, in-
 "temperate, proud, ambitious, A high-
 "minded, insolent, &c. Which is not on-
 "ly an Indication but even a Demonstra-

"tion

William H. to John H. 1791

“ tian that although Mens Passions and
 “ Lusts may transport them into those
 “ Vices, yet their Judgments and Princi-
 “ ples are against them. So He Not
 only the Spectators but Actors of these
 Immoralities, instead of applauding them,
 hiss at them, and load them with Dis-
 grace and Dishonour. The very Worth of
 Men bear a reverence to Goodness and
 Honesty, and naturally pay respect to
 Good and Virtuous Men. * *Cato* the ri-
 gideſt *Cenſor* that ever was in *Rome*,
 though he check'd and curb'd that Peo-
 ple after a high rate, yet he was belov'd
 by them, and they ſet up a Statue for
 him. This ſhews that Virtue is praise-
 worthy in its own Nature: this is an ar-
 gument of the Inherent Excellency of Mo-
 rality, and that there is naturally implant-
 ed in Mens Souls a ſenſe of that Excellen-
 cy. This is a ſign that the diſtinction be-
 tween Virtue and Vice flows from the na-
 tural and inbred Dictates of Humane
 Minds. This proves that ſuch Principles
 flow from them of their own accord, and
 need nothing to extort them. Certainly,
 then the Point we have been handling
 may be judged by this one thing alone.
 There cannot be a greater argument of
 the Inbred Principle of Truth and Good-
 neſs

* Plutarch. in vitâ Catonis.

ness then this, that they are the Common Sentiment of all Mankind. Seeing all Mouths confess them, and all Hearts give assent to them, and the Catholick Practise answers to these, it is evident that they were at first plac'd in Mens Minds by God, and that they are the inseparable Companions of our Rational Nature.

○ If it be said here that Nations and Countries differ as to their Opinions of Virtue and Morality, yea that whole Nations shew nothing of these in their Actions, yea they act quite contrary to these Principles: the Answer is, many People have corrupted and distorted the Law of Nature: and then 'tis no wonder that there proceeds thence a Variety of Sentiments among them, and that their Practise favours little of Moral Goodness. Of such the Apostle speaks in the first Chapter to the *Romans*, and lets us know that *they hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*, ver. 18. Whence we gather that the Common Principles of Truth which are implanted by God in all Mens Hearts (for the Apostle speaks of the very Heathens) are sometimes *detain'd* and *imprison'd*, they are choak'd and stifled by Mens perverse Wills and Lusts. Hence 'tis said, *they chang'd the Truth of God into a Lie*, ver. 25. that

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is, those true Apprehensions and Notions which they originally had concerning the Being of God and his Nature were corrupted by them, and exchang'd for false Notions and Conceptions, whence sprang Idolatry and other vile Practises among them, mention'd by the Apostle in the insuing part of the Chapter. So then 'tis possible for Men to stifle these inward and home-bred Notices, in so much that they shall not be useful to them. Though they inwardly feel them, yet they act against them, and willfully neglect to attend to them. There are such besotted People in the World who in some measure obliterate the Law of Nature written in their Minds, and then 'tis no wonder that they fall into the practise of that which is against their reasonable Nature, as for example Incest, and the commission of Idolatry. As to the former *Minutius Felix* testifies that the * *Persians, Egyptians* and *Athenians* were joyn'd in Marriage with their Mothers and Sisters. And particularly of the *Egyptians* the same is attested by † *Diodore of Sicily*. So the Learned || *Selden* sheweth from several Instances that Mar-
E riage

* Jus est apud Persas misceri cum matribus: Ægyptiis & Athenis cum sororibus legitima connubia. *Octavius*.

† Lib. 1.

|| De jure Nat. & Gent. l. 5. c. 11.

riage with the Mother and Sister was practis'd in the Eastern Countries. But this is no argument of the Truth of what some Men contend for, in opposition to what we are now maintaining, but 'tis only a proof of the gross Depravity of Mens Minds. It acquaints us that Humane Nature is exceedingly corrupted, that Mankind is extreamly debauched, and that they act contrary to the Natural Propension of their Consciences. And as to the Particular Instances before alledg'd, it proves nothing against the General; for that there was something of Natural dictate in the contrary case is clear from the general Consent of other Nations, and especially of the Wisest among them. Thus the *Greek* and *Roman* Philosophers judg'd these Marriages to be Incestuous and Unlawful, which argues that this was a Law of Nature and Right Reason. So as to *Idolatry*, it was look'd upon as an Irrational and Absurd thing by the Wisest heads among the *Pagans*, though they did not disallow it by their practise, lest they should have immediately fallen a sacrifice to the Ignorant Rabble, or have been solemnly tried before the Judges of the place, as *Socrates* was, for he (as well as *St. Paul* afterwards) reproving the Superstition of *Athens*, was cited before the *Areopagitical* Elders, yea and he was sentenc'd

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tenc'd by them to Death because he disparaged the Gentile Polytheism. This severe Example strack a terror into the whole Philosophick Tribe, and made them very Cautious in what they said. But from several Passages in their Writings it may be gather'd that they own'd only One God, and abhorr'd the contrary Opinion and Practice. We can only gather from what hath been said, that though there are Infinite Principles of Truth in Mens Minds, yet oftentimes they are not made use of, for where ill education, and custom, or prejudice and passion have corrupted the Mind, there it is hard to exert these Notions. There are in Men natural seeds of Equity, Honesty, and all other Moral Virtues, but they suffer not these Seeds to grow up and fructify. However, that of *Porphyrius* may be said in this case, " * Some Nations are become Savage and Inhumane, yet it is not reasonable that those who are equal Judges of things should reproach Humane Nature because of them. It must be acknowledg'd that the Laws of Natural Religion are common to all of them: and we can't disannul this by alledg-

E 2 . ing

* Τινὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν ἰσχυρίσασθαι, ὅτι ἐν ἡ ἀποστροφῇ τῶν ἐγγράμμων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ ἀνθρώπων φύσιν. De Abstinēt.

ing that many Persons, yea whole Countries seem not to act with any regard to them, for the same Arguing will prove that there is no such thing as Reason belonging to Humane Nature, because some never exert it, and because the generality of Persons act and live contrary to it.

Lastly, To confirm what hath been said, I will add this by way of surplusage, viz, that this Doctrine of Innate Ideas hath been own'd, and professedly acknowledged by all ranks of Authors, *Jews, Gentiles, Christians*; and it is not amiss to observe by what various Names they are described by them. " They are * that
 " Law, saith the Excellent *Philo*, which
 " will not lie, nor deceive us; a Right
 " Dictate, which being not corruptible
 " it self was not framed by this or that
 " corruptible and mortal Man, nor is
 " contain'd in Books, or engraven on
 " liveless Pillars; but being it self un-
 " corruptible is imprinted by the Immor-
 " tal God or Nature in the immortal
 " Mind of Man. This is † that faithful
 " reprovcr which is born with and dwells
 " in every Man, which will not with-
 " out regret admit of any thing that is
 " cul-

* Νόμος δὲ ἀθανάτου θεοῦ λόγος, &c. De Decalogo.
 † Ἐκάστη ψυχὴ συνοικῶν καὶ συμπεφυκὼς ἐλεγχῶ.

“culpable and criminal, because of its
“native Hatred of Vice, and love of
“Virtue which is inseparable from it.
This Inward Principle is stiled by the
Fathers of the Christian Church the (a) nat-
ural, the (b) self-taught, the (c) innate,
the (d) unseminated, unwritten Law. It
is said to be the (e) Characters of Gods
own engraving. It is called by St. Jerom
(ad Demetr.) that (f) Natural Sanctity
which is in our Minds, and by Justin Mar-
tyr (g) the Seeds of Truth which are to be
found in all Men.

And the Gentile Moralists here add
their suffrage, telling us that these (h)
Right Judgments of things (for so Plu-
tarch particularly calls this Connatural
Law) are in all Men. (i) “This is that
“Law (saith that Excellent Moralist)
“which is not written outwardly in

E 3 “Books

(a) Νόμος ενστικτος. Chrysost. hom. 12. ad pop. Antioch.

(b) Αυτοδιδασκικτος. Ibid.

(c) Νόμος ἐμφυτος. Oecumen. in cap. 7. ad Rom.

(d) Νόμος ἀνεσπαρμένος. Orig. Philocal.

(e) Νόμος ἁγγραφος. Greg. Naz. Orat. 16.

(f) Θεοχαράκις γραμματις. Theodoret. Therapent. Serm. 1.

(g) Σπέρματα ἀληθείας παρὰ πάντων. Apol. 2.

(h) Καὶ τοὶ χρίσται μὴ δεῖναι πάντων ἐνυπάρχοντων ἀνθρώποις νομίζουσιν. Orat. de Alex. M. virtute.

(i) Οὗ νόμου οὐκ ἐν βιβλίοις ἔστιν ἁγγραφημένος, εἰς τισὶ ζώοις, ἀλλ’ ἐμφυτος ὡς ἐνὶ ὅλῳ λόγῳ. ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων καὶ παρὰ φύσιν, καὶ μετέπειτα τὴν ψυχὴν ἔχον ἔρημον ἡγιασμένης. Idem ad Princip. Indoct.

“Books or on certain Tables of Wood,
 “but is a Living Reason in a Man's very
 “Heart, always inhabiting with him,
 “and keeping ward in him; and never
 “suffering the Soul to be void of
 “Conduct and Government. Accord-
 ing to other famous Masters of Morals,
 especially the *Stoicks*, this is named the
 * *Common Nature*, and the † *Common or*
Universal Law. (And by *Tully* (who was
 not only a *Stoick*, but a *Platonist*, and in-
 deed had all Sects of Philosophy in him,
 as a Man may find in his Writings)
 these Inward Impressions, these Primi-
 tive Stamps of Virtue on Mens Minds
 are called || *Sparks and Seeds of Virtues*.
 To live agreeably to these is to live Vir-
 tuously, for these lead us to that. (And
 he that comments upon *Pythagoras's Verses*
 tells us that this is the reason why Men
 run into Error, and see not the way
 to Truth, because * *they make not a right*
use of these Common Notices implanted by
God in every rational Creature. And it is
 well known that These by the Antient
Stoick Philosophers are call'd *Preconceiv'd*
Notions, Anticipations, Presumptions, as we
 fre-

* Ἡ κοινὴ φύσις. Laert. in Zenone.

† Οὐρανὸς ὁ κοινός. Ibid.

|| Virtutum igniculi & semina. De Leg. lib. I.

Διὰ τὸ μὴ δεῖναι χρῆσθαι τοῖς κοιναῖς ἐννομίαις, ἀλλὰ
 προεῖναι ἢ ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τὸ κοινόν ὅπου. Hierocl.

frequently read in their Writings. Thus it is generally agreed to among the Wif-
est Heads (and those of all Denominati-
ons) that there are Innate Ideas, spring-
ing from our own Nature, and belong-
ing to us as we are Men, and that they
are the immediate Channel of Natural
Truths: which is the thing I undertook
to make good.

Secondly, We come to know the Truth
by *Rational Discourse* and *Argumentation*,
by *Deducing* of things Consequently from
one another. And This *Deduction* is
made

1. From those Innate Notions, the
stock of Primæve Principles which I have
before spoken of. And indeed these Con-
natural Impressions would be Useless, and
in time would be indangered to be Blot-
ted out if they were not frequently Rou-
zed by Reasoning and Arguing, by Ra-
tional Deductions and Inferences. By
these it comes to pass that those Natural
and Inbred Ideas are made Useful and
Serviceable to the finding out of Truth.
By the Working of the Mind, i. e. by
Ratiocination those Inward Notions are
stirred up and Improved, as Fire, which
is Subtile matter shut up in Bodies, is
discover'd and brought forth of them by
continued Motion and Agitation.

2ly. These Reasonings and Deductions are made from Without as well as Within us. *Sense* is made an Inlet to Truth and Knowledge: in so much that *Aristotle* averrs (as we observ'd before) that there is nothing in the Understanding which was not first taken from the *Sense*. But in This the Philosopher was much mistaken, and ran counter to what I have let you see is asserted by the Wise Men, and even by Holy Scripture, that there are some Notions of Truth written in our Hearts from our very Birth, and are not borrowed from Sense. We ought then to acknowledge the Assistance of Both These, *viz.* the Inward Conceptions which we were born with, and likewise our Reasoning from Outward and Sensible Objects. We may Argue not only from those Common Notions, but from all things which our Senses set before us. And it is certain that they are set before us on purpose that we may Argue and Reason from them: for the Law of Nature is engraven not only in the Mind of Man, but on the Visible Frame and Constitution of things in the World that are before our Eyes. The Works of God are daily Teachers of Truth. This *World* is * the Nursery and School in which Mens Minds

* Διδασκαλῶν καὶ παιδευήσεων τῶν ἀνθρώπων
 ψυχῶν. Basil. 1. Homil. in Hexæmeter,

Minds are brought up and Instructed: The Outward Senses administer to the Understanding, the Body being ordained by God to be serviceable to the Soul. Hence flow *Observation* and *Experience*, those Great School-masters of *Truth*. To which may be referred what the Psalmist saith, *Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge*, Psal. 19. 2. These are the two grand Teachers and Instructors of the World. No new day or night passes us but brings with it Opportunities of Further Discoveries. Wherefore it was well said of the Ancients that *Time* is the mother of *Truth*. To Morrow we may know what we are ignorant of to Day. By Fresh Occurrences we take in Materials of Knowledge. By a frequent Observing God's Works, by taking Notice of the Signal acts of Providence, by weighing the Remarkable Accidents of our Lives, and by a continued series of Experiments issuing from them all we Inhanse our Knowledge, and come to a Clearer Prospect of Truth, and understand the Mind of God and the nature of things more fully.

Now when I say that *Sense* is a useful and necessary way of conveying the knowledge of Truth, This doth not Oppose what is so frequently asserted by the Wisest and Holiest Persons, viz. that Ab-
stracting

abstracting from Sense is One Help to Divine Truth. The very Pagan Moralists * had attained to This Notion. The Platonists talk excellently of This, namely the separating the Soul from Sensual Objects. The way to come to God is according to them *Ἀποκρίσις τῶν αἰσθητικῶν*. Abstracting from Sensible things, and what belongs to them. And accordingly Philosophy is defined by them * *Ἀπορριψὶς τοῦ σώματος καὶ αἰσθητικῶν*, a loosning and weaning of the Soul from the Body. And *Empedocles* also acquaints us that † *ἡ μὲν οὖν αἰσθητικὴ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθὴς ἀντιληψὶς*, Reason without External Senses is the Judge of Truth. We must sometimes Abstract from the Body and Sense, and by the Single force of the Soul examine and contemplate things. This is one Direct Path to Truth. But yet at other times the Ministry of the Senses is necessary, for having Bodies as well as Souls we must make use of the former as well as the later, especially because we constantly converse with Corporeal Objects. By our Bodily Senses the Greatest and Worthiest Notices are convey'd to our Minds, by their help we arrive to the Proof of the most Important Truths.

And
 * Magni autem est ingenij, revocare mentem à Sensibus, & cogitationem à Consuetudine abducere. Cic. Tusc. Quest. 1.

† Platonis Phædo, Alcinous, &c.

And Therefore the Inspired Writers dis-
dained not to make use of them in way
of Argument for the Christian Religion,
That which we have heard, that which we
have seen with our Eyes, and our hands
have handled, that declare we unto you,
1 John 1. 1. The Senses of Hearing or
Seeing are appeal'd to as satisfactory in
Luke 1. 2. Acts 4. 20. 16. 40, 41. 1 Cor.
15. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 16, 18. and several other
places. The Testimony of Sense is made
use of here in matters of Fact of the high-
est Nature, viz. the History of our Savi-
our, and his Miracles and all he did,
therefore it is a good Evidence of Truth.

Thirdly, Reasoning and Argumenta-
tion must be from *Authority*. Catholic
Suffrage in some cases is an Evidence of
Truth; thus *Seneca* makes use of it to
prove a * *God*, and † *the Immortality of*
the Soul, though he hath greater Argu-
ments. So those Truths which relate to
Christianity may be made out to us by
the Universal Suffrage of the Church,
which accordingly is styled by the Apo-
stle *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*,
1 Tim. 3. 15. alluding to the then known
custom

* Veritatis argumentum est, aliquid omnibus videri.
Epist. 117.

† Cum de animorum immortalitate loquimur, non leve
momentum habet nos habet Consensus hominum, &c.
Ibid.

custom of fixing up the Laws and Edicts of Princes and Magistrates on Pillars, that all might have notice of them: therefore we rationally infer thence that the Tradition and Testimony of the Church are proper Means of Knowledge and Truth. For as the Church was first Gather'd, and afterwards is Preserved by Truth, so the Truth is Upheld and Sustained by the Church. And therefore That which by the Uninterrupted Consent of the Church of Christ hath passed down to us is to be Reverenced and Imbraced. And if we act like Good Christians, we shall Thank God for affording us such means of establishing our Judgments, and directing our Practises. St. *Augustine* * advising us to have recourse to the Church, acquaints us that That will tell us what is Truth, and the Holy Scripture will tell us which is the True Church. To this purpose This † is a Rule laid down by that Good Father, that Those Propositions and Doctrines which we find to have been held by the Universal Church in

All

* Quisquis falli metuit alicujus obscuritate quæstionis, Ecclesiam de illâ consulat, quam sine ullâ ambiguitate Scriptura Sacra demonstrat. Aug. contr. Crescon. l. 2. c. 33.

† Quod Universa tenet Ecclesia, nec Concilij institutum, sed semper retentum est, non sine Authoritate Apostolicâ traditum rectissime creditur. Aug. de baptismo, l. 4. c. 24. & alijs in locis.

All Ages, especially in the First and Earliest Times before those Doctrines were Considered of and Establish'd by Councils and Synods, those may deservedly pass for Doctrines and Institutions Apostolical. Which Rule may be of Good Use at this Day to Confirm us in the belief of the Doctrines concerning Infant Baptism, the Observation of the Lord's Day, Ecclesiastical Government and Discipline, and several other Truths which call for our Assent and Suffrage, they having been Universally received by the Church.

Thus I have briefly shewed you *How* and by *What Ways* our Reasons and Understandings come to the knowledge of What is Truth. You see what are the Mediums of acquiring this Knowledge. The Sum is This, that if our Minds be let alone to themselves, they will arrive in part to a discovery of Truth by their own Native and Inbred force. For Religion is inlaid in the very Nature of the Soul, so that we may attain to the knowledge of it in some measure by having recourse to the Common Principles in our Minds, by consulting this Excellent Oracle, this *Urim* and *Thummim* placed in our own *Breasts*. We shall be very successful if, with the Incomparable *French* Philosopher, we do as it were Expunge
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all our former Notions and Impressions, and give our selves over to a Reflection on the Ideas of our Minds, and the naked Conceptions of our Souls. And when we have done this, we must advance further, and proceed to make *Rational Inferences* from things: for 'tis certain that the Great Principles as well as the Acts of Moral Religion are the results of the Natural Power of Reasoning. So that if Men would but attend to the Impressions and Pourtraitures which are on their own Minds, if they would suffer Reason to go First, and Lead the way when they are on the Inquest after Truth, they would certainly find Great part of it. But moreover, not only by consulting their Natural and Common Principles, and by Rational Deductions and Sober Reflections, but by the Improving of These by the ministry of *Sense* and *Experience*, they shall be enabled to judge aright, or (which is the same) to discharge the proper Office of Reason, which is to distinguish Truth from Falseness. For Truth makes Court to our very Sense, and is founded on Matter of Fact, and Clear Observation thence. Lastly, it is built on *Authority*, and more particularly on that of the *Church*. For though we abhor the Language of a late Writer, viz. that *the only infallible Rule*

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to which we ought to adhere is the Authority of the Church, to which we ought to yield a blind obedience, and without Reserve (which words one would wonder should come from the Pen of so free and ingenious a Man as *Monsieur du Pin. Biblioth. Patr. 4 Cent. in Rhodanus*) yet we are ready to grant that the Joint Testimony of the whole Church of Christ is one source and means of conveying Truth to us. And accordingly we find the *Fathers* using this Argument frequently: *Heresy* is brought to this Standard by *Tertullian, Cyprian, Optatus*, and several other Writers of the Church, and is tried, and cast by it. But generally they make use of Tradition or the Churches Authority only as a Suppletory, and Overplus, and to back the Truth asserted in *Scripture*. Therefore of that I shall speak next.

CHAP. III.

Divine Testimony or Scripture an other Channel of Truth. We must distinguish between Natural and Reveal'd Religion. A brief Account of this latter. The Necessity of Divine Revelation in order to knowing the Truth proved, 1. from the Pretences of all Parties to Extraordinary Revelation. 2. From the Weakness and Corruption of Humane Nature. 3. From the Disproportion between our Thoughts and Gods. 4. From the Need of Divine Revelation to confirm those Truths which are discover'd by Natural Light. 5. From the Different Dispensations in the several Ages of the World. We ought to have an High Esteem of all Reveal'd Religion. An Eminent Writer of our Church animadverted upon. A noted Lay-Writer examin'd and refuted. We must repair to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the Grand Standard of Truth. Reason and Revelation not inconsistent. By these two all Controversies in Religion are to be decided.

D*ivine Testimony must be added to Humane : Scripture must be join'd with Reason or Argumentation. For these are an other Channel wherein Truth runs.*

To

To convince us of this it is requisite to consider that as there is a *Natural* or *Moral Religion*, so there is a *Supernatural* or *Revealed* one, there is a Goodness founded on a Revelation or Divine Positive Law: and this Law is grounded on God's Good Pleasure, and therefore cannot be known till it be Revealed and some ways Declared. Natural Religion depends on the Nature of the Thing it self, but Revealed Religion on the Institution and Will of God. So that the Principles, Source and Fountains of *Natural* and *Reveal'd* Religion are diverse: for this proceeds from a peculiar Revelation, but that is found out by mere Reason and Humane Means, of which I have been speaking. It is true the Natural or Moral Goodness is from God himself as well as This, but That is from what God inwardly implants in our Minds, but This is from what God outwardly declareth. And how doth he declare it but by giving us the *Holy Scriptures*, which yield us a compleat account of whatever God hath revealed concerning his Worship and the true way of Religion in all the ages of the World. But *Christianity* being the Last and most Perfect Draught of *Reveal'd Religion*, and that which is to take place in all future times, we are most of all concern'd to acquaint our selves with This,

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and to study the true Nature of it, as it is delivered in the New Testament. This most Consummate Platform of *Reveal'd Truth* consists in the knowledge of the Three Persons in the Sacred Trinity, and the several things appertaining to them, especially the Second Person, his Undertakings and Offices: it contains the Doctrines of Eternal Predestination and Election, of the State of Innocence, of Man's Fall, of Original Sin, of Man's Restitution, and the Method of it: it gives us notice of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace, the one in Innocence, the other after the Fall: it is made up of the Doctrines of Justification, Regeneration, Adoption, Faith, Evangelical Repentance, Self-denial, Imitation of Christ, the Institutions of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: it contains the more Certain Discoveries and Proofs of the Immortality of Humane Souls, the Resurrection of the Body, the General Judgment, Heaven, Hell, and the Eternity of these latter. Wherefore it is absolutely necessary that we be intimately acquainted with these Sacred Writings, in order to knowing these *Divine Truths* which are contain'd in them. We have made but little progress in *Truth*, if we go no farther than Natural Reason conducts us. Our main search is yet behind, *viz.* into the

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Infallible Oracles of the Scriptures, where the most sublime and heavenly, as well as the most beneficial and important Discoveries are made to us, and where the Evidence is as strong and convincing as that in Natural Religion, though a late Writer without any proof at all hath asserted the * contrary.

But it may be demanded here, Why is Truth to be sought for in *Divine Revelation*? What is the reason that we cannot make any considerable progress in the discovery of Truth unless we add the Written Records of the Bible to that Law of Natural Reason which is engraven on our Hearts? Upon what account is a Revealed (as well as a Natural) Religion requisite in the World, and why must it be attended to by us in our Enquiry after Truth?

I answer, 1. All, the False and Corrupt Religions in the World pretend to Divine Revelation: which shews that it is a common and prevailing Notion that the *TRUE RELIGION* (for even Impostors pretend theirs to be such) should be Confirmed and Assured by Divine Testimony and Approbation, and such as shall be

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* The Evidences and Proofs of Natural Religion are more certain and unquestionable than those of Reveal'd Religion; and the particulars of which it consists are of more importance. Mr. Nye of Nat. and Reveal'd Relig. Sect. 1.

able to baffle the Pretences of False Worshippers. As almost all the Antient Kings, to make themselves more Venerable to their Subjects, derived their Pedegree from some God, (till at last they made *Themselves Gods*) so their *Laws* were also pretended to be from a *Deity*. *Numa* made the People of *Rome* believe he had his *Laws* from *Egeria*, a kind of a Nymph Goddess. *Zoroastes* said he received his from *Oromazis*, a certain God in great esteem among the *Bactrians* over whom he reign'd. *Trismegistus* told his *Egyptians* that he had his from *Mercury*. *Charondas* put it into the *Sicilians* Heads that *Saturne* furnish'd him with *Laws* for that Country. *Minos* perswaded his *Cretians* that those which he govern'd them by came from *Jupiter*. *Lycurgus*, the famous Lawgiver of *Lacedemonia*, pretended that his were received from *Apollo*; and *Solon's* *Laws* which he gave to the *Athenians* were said to be from *Mineva*. *Zamolxis* Lawgiver to the *Scythians* told them that *Vesta* was the Author and Instituter of his Prescriptions. All this argues, that they thought there was some Reason to have *Divine Laws*. And so one of their very **PHILOSOPHERS** pretended to *Revelation*. *Ælian* tells us it was reported that *Pythagoras* had an Eagle come generally to him, and convers'd with him, and inspired him with

Philo-

Philosophick Notions. But the *AUGURIES* and *ORACLES* were the most Visible and Noted Instances of the Heathens pretending to Divine Revelation, and they thereby told the World that their Own Knowledge and Inventions were Defective, and that they stood in need of some Divine Council and Assistance. The *Mahometan Religion* pretendeth to be no less than Divine, and to owe its Original to the Angel *Gabriel*; for so that Impostour made them believe, and perswaded them that the Copy of the *Alcoran* was brought to him by that Heavenly Messenger: and as *Pythagoras* had his *EAGLE* so *Mahomet* had his *Dove*, who was supposed to communicate Celestial Notions to him. It is well known that *Popery* as well as *Turcism* hath been beholding to the Pretence of *Revelation*. Many of their Saints are said to have convers'd familiarly with *Christ's Person*; and *Ignatius Loiola* and others had commerce with the *Virgin Mary*, which according to them is much greater. And who sees not that the whole rabble of *Enthusiasts* have profess'd themselves beholding to New Lights, to Dreams, Visions, Apparitions, Raptures, which they vote to be no less then Divine Revelations? Thus it is agreed on by the Pretenders to Religion that the Natural and Common Im-

provements of Mankind are unable to dictate in these great Affairs, and that some Discoveries and Manifestations from above are required to the right settling of so great a matter. Nay, we read in *Soci-nus's* Life that his Uncle *Lelins*, who furnish'd him with his Theological Notions, and first set him up, made pretences to extraordinary Illapses and Revelation. All the several Religions that ever appear'd in the World have laid claim to Divine Revelation, and by it as 'twere confess a Necessity of some Supernatural Revelation for the guiding and directing of Mankind into the way of Truth.

2. The Weakness and Corruption of Natural Religion speak the Necessity of Divine Revelation. Nature and Reason by the Fall of *Adam*, and by the Evil Habits and Customs of Men are depraved. Ignorance and Uncertainty have more and more clouded Mens Minds. Many Instances might be assign'd in which their Knowledge hath been Defective and Erroneous, in which their Understandings have been darken'd, so that they *could not* make right use of their Reasons after a long accustoming themselves to the contrary, and because of their Lusts and Sensualities they *would not*. Man being degenerated, Religion was so too: False conceptions and notions, mistakes and delusions

delusions about God and Providence, and all things relating to them, but especially about his Worship, were frequent every where. The Shortness and Insufficiency of Natural Religion appear'd in that there were so Few Worshippers of God in the Old World: we read of no Eminent ones but *Abel, Seth, Sheth and Noah*. Which sheweth that the Imperfect use of Reason together with the Stubbornness of the Passions hindred Men from a Right Worshipping of God, and that without the Special Guidance of God it was impossible to Serve and Worship him aright. And afterwards, the want of Supernatural Light was the cause why the generality of *Heathens* were gross Idolaters. Thus a particular Divine Revelation was necessary to the Repairing of God's Worship, because of the Ignorance and Corruption of the World. But the Infirmary of Natural Religion shewed it self chiefly in the degeneracy of their Manners, and in their universal defection from the Practice of Goodness. Though the Light of Nature furnish'd them with Common Principles of Truth and Morality, yet it became insufficient to the vitiated World, to lead them into the way of Virtue, and to make them renounce all their wicked and enormous Courses, and to make their Lives Godly and Religious. Therefore

it was Necessary that for the direction of Mankind there should be added to the Law of Nature a Divine Law. Earth being so darkned and depraved, there must be a Supernatural Light from Heaven: there must be not only a Natural but an Instituted Religion: there must be not only Reason but Scripture to discover to us with is Truth. Hence it was that though God might have left the doctrine of Faith to be convey'd by Oral Tradition only, it was his pleasure it should be collected into one Sacred Volume, which we are to esteem as the Heavenly Charter, the Book of God, the Complete Digests of the Divine Laws.

3. God's thoughts and Ours, His ways and Ours are not alike: therefore a Revealed Religion is necessary to know God's Will. *Who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellour?* Rom. 11. 34. God takes not Counsel of Man, and Man knoweth not God's Will and Counsel unless he pleaseth to Reveal it. To this purpose the Apochryphal Writer speaks in *Wisd. 9. 13, &c.* *What Man is he that can know the Counsel of God? or who can think what the Will of the Lord is? For the thoughts of mortal Men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon Earth, and with labour*

bour do we find the things that are before us: but the things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out? and thy counsel who hath known, except thou give Wisdom, and send thy Holy Spirit from above? Men are wont to measure God by Themselves, and to conceive of His ways and doings as they, poor ignorant and defective Creatures, use to do of their own: whence it must needs follow that their shallow Minds will form strange apprehensions concerning the Great Mysteries of Religion, and the Divine Transactions in the World. This is the root of *Pelagianism* and *Socinianism*, that vain Minds scan all things according to the Model of their Natural Conceptions, they will not admit of what is above Reason, If you mention to them the *Divine Decrees*, or the *Original Stain of Mankind*, but especially the *Holy Trinity*, they cry out presently that you *go about to make Asses of all Mankind; whilst they in the mean time shew themselves to be very dull and stupid Animals, because it argues the utmost stupidity imaginable to think that *Reveal'd Religion* must be adjusted to Natural and Common Reason. No, no: this contains in it many things which as Reason could not at first discover, so being

* Notes on Athanasius's Creed

ing discover'd it cannot comprehend. Nothing can enlighten and direct us here but the Written Will of Heaven, according to that Excellent Saying of an Ancient Father, ** God cannot be known aright but by himself*, i. e. by Light imparted from himself. And we are told by a *more Sure Word* that *† the Natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God*, i. e. the Man who proceeds only upon Principles of Natural Light, he that hath no Supernatural Discoveries, but is led by Humane Reason only, must needs be in the dark as to Heavenly and Spiritual Mysteries. Reason was unable to find out those *Dispensations* which were revealed either in the Law or the Gospel, especially in the latter. Natural Reason could not pitch upon the Method of Salvation, and the True Way of being Reconciled to God. *The World by Wisdom knew not God*, saith the Apostle, *I Cor. I. 21.* They could not think of the way of Salvation by JESUS; yea, their Natural Wisdom gainsaid and opposed it, when it was propounded to them. The knowledge of This cannot be arrived to by Natural Principles. This Doctrine we owe to

** Non potest Deus nisi per Deum intelligi. Hilar. de Trinit. l. 1.*

† I Cor. 2. 14.

to the *Scriptures* : this is only by *Revelation* in the Gospel. Nature could not dictate these things which are Supernatural, and are not the result of Humane Reason. These depend wholly upon the Free determination of God's Will. We must have God's Word for them ; otherwise we cannot arrive to the knowledge of them. And this Word and Will of the Revealer or Institutour is the Last thing into which Revealed Religion is resolved. It is so because God will have it so. * God's Pleasure and Command are the Reason of the thing. Thus the Whole Evangelical Dispensation depended on God's Free Will. *Whether* God would be reconciled to Man, and *How* were Arbitrary. God might have been always at Enmity with Sinners, and not have accepted of any Terms of Peace and Reconciliation ; or he might have proceeded some Other way. Therefore this Redemption by the Blood of *Jesus* could never have been Thought of, if it had not been Revealed. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man the things* which God hath designed in order to the Restoring and Saving of lost Man ; nor can they be any ways

† Stat pro ratione voluntas.

ways known but by God's Revealing of them. *No Man knoweth the Son but the Father* (saith our Saviour,) *neither knoweth any Man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him,* Matth. xi. 27. *Revelation* then is indispensably requisite to the Knowing and Enjoying of God, for as he is the Beatifical Object, so he is the Author of the Acts of Seeing and Enjoying: and he only knoweth Himself, and can manifest Himself and his Will by his Son who is equal to him. In brief, This is clear that the Cause of Man's Fall, and God's being pleas'd to be Reconciled to Man by the Blood of the *Messias*, and the like, are known by *REVELATION* only, because otherwise the *Heathens*, especially those that were very Intelligent and Sagacious, would have known these things as well as We. But they were all in the dark as to these Profound Points: and the reason was because they were not Supernaturally Enlightned. The Sun is seen by its own Light: so is it with the Sun of Righteousness, the True *Light of the World*; it cannot be seen, known and discover'd but by Beams of Light and Knowledge sent from it self. This makes it evident that Reason alone will not discover Divine Truth to us, but that the Word of God is absolutely necessary for that purpose.

4. Revealed Religion is necessary, not only to discover to us Supernatural Truths and Mysteries, but also to Confirm Those Truths which are discover'd to us by Natural Light. The Creation of the World is set down by an Inspired Pen, *viz.* by that of *Moses*, in the beginning of *Genesis*. Therefore the Apostle saith, *By Faith we understand that the Worlds were framed by the word of God*, Heb. xi. 3. We understand by *Reason* and *Argument* that the World was made, and had a Beginning, and that it could be from none but God: but we know this by *Faith* also, *i. e.* we are Ascertained of it from the Word of God. The Creation of all things out of nothing is best known from the Bible: there all the Particulars are set down, and we cannot be deceived. And so for many Other Notions, or parts of Natural Knowledge, as of the Power, Wisdom, Justice, and other Attributes of God, and of his Providence in the Conduct of the World, and the like, they are more fully and clearly discover'd in Scripture. If we speak even of these things which are attain'd to by Natural Light, it is necessary that we add also the Revealed Light, to discern them more perfectly. Which shews the necessity of *Divine Revelation*, more especially that which is *Christian* and *Evangelical* to be added

added to *Reason*. There being so many Mistakes and Errors, Divine Providence thought fit to antidote against these by *Revelation*, for this establishes and preserves Natural or Moral Truths as well as Supernatural ones. The Canonical Writings have asserted and ratified all the Notions of Good and Evil, so that we are doubly obliged to entertain them.

5. To convince any Man of the Necessity of Divine Revelation, and a Particular Discovery from God, it is enough to see what hath been done in the several Ages of the World. Observe, there never was any Natural Religion alone in the World: look on the several *Dispensations*, and you will find that *Revelations* were always with them. It is sufficient to see what was done before the *Flood*, and what after it, what Divine Administrations towards Men were both under *Moses* and under *Christ*, in the times of the *Law* and of the *Gospel*; especially to see what *Christ* hath done, and what New Discoveries he hath bless'd the World with, this is sufficient (I say) to persuade us of the reality of what hath been asserted, viz. that it is requisite that Divine Discoveries and Manifestations should be added to Natural Religion. These several Discoveries which were before our Saviours coming are meant by the

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the Apostle when he saith * God at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, and those other latter Discoveries and Revelations made by our Blessed Lord himself, and by his Apostles afterwards (which are the most Exact and Compleat) are meant by what follows, *He bath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.* So then all *Revealed Religion* is contain'd in the Writings of the Prophets and Apostles, in the Books of the Old and New Testament: and therefore from these Inspired Writings we must be taught what is *Truth*, which is the thing I undertook to make good.

And now how reasonable and just is it that we should have an high esteem of all *Reveal'd Religion*, seeing it is the source and spring of the greatest and most Illustrious Truths, and such as are most to be valued by us? By Natural Principles we are Intelligent Moral Men, but those of Supernatural Religion render us *Christians*, and therefore by how much Christianity exceeds Morality, by so much should we prefer the exalted Truths of the New Testament to those that are attain'd by Philosophical Instructions and Precepts. There is a sort of Men at this day

* Heb. i. 1, 2.

day who talk very highly concerning *Natural Religion*, and applaud the Certainty of it, and in this they do very well and laudably; but they speak very meanly of that Religion which depends upon *Revelation*, and they diminish the Authority and lower the Excellency of it, but in this they do very ill. For it is an undeniable Truth that things Revealed are as Certain as things discover'd to us by Reason. The Word of God is as credible as what is made out by Deductions in the use of our Natural Faculties. Nay, I add, we have a Greater Assurance of what the Holy Ghost in Scripture saith than of what our Natural Knowledge dictates to us, for the Evidence is clearer and firmer, in as much as the Divine Testimony is more Authentick then that of Humane Reason, for the one is Infallible, but the other is not so.

But a late Reverend Writer who is well known seems not to have been of this Perswasion, but rather thought that Reveald Truth is not so certain as Natural Truth. *The natural knowledge which Men have of God, saith he, when all is done, is the surest and fastest hold that Religion hath on Humane Nature.* Dr. Tillotson, Sermon 2. on Rom. 1. 18, 19. Say and pretend what you will, Natural Light and Reason are the best and surest Tenure that

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Christianity it self. (for he speaks of all Religion in the Words immediately foregoing) holds by. So he is at this again, *Serm. 7. on Jam. 1. 13, 14. Every Man ought to govern himself in the Interpretation of Scripture by those natural notions which Men have of God and his Perfections: for when all is done, this is one of the surest ways of reasoning in Religion.* But I must needs say I was sorry to meet with such a strange Passage as this in an other place of his Writings, * *Mothers nursing of their own Children is, saith he, a Natural Duty, and because it is so, of a more necessary and indispensable Obligation than any Positive Precept of Reveal'd Religion.* Whence without any breach of Charity one would be apt to gather that this Reverend Author had a very low Opinion of Reveal'd Religion, and particularly the Christian, for Natural Religion according to him is more obligatory than the Reveal'd one. He prefers a Womans Nursing her Children to all the Duties of Christianity. If that Performance be more necessary and indispensable than Any Positive Precept, then it is more necessary and indispensable then believing Jesus to be the Messias, than Trusting in Christ for Life and Salvation, than discharging the Duties proper and peculiar to the Christian.

Serm. 1. concerning the Education of Children.

to the New Testament and the Gospel, for these are *Positive Precepts* of Christianity which is the most considerable part of *Reveal'd Religion*. I should not have mention'd this strange Passage but that I am sensible the passing it by in silence might have done a great deal of harm to some Persons, who are ready to swallow This Saying of his down for the sake of several Good things in the Writings of that Celebrated Prelate. And I the rather make mention of this because the *Deists* at this time have so great an Harvest, and would be still making more Profelytes, and out of this Writer as soon as any that I know of, if they have Opportunity. Wherefore I thought fit to enter a Caution against such Expressions as these, which seem to argue too mean an Opinion of that Religion which is *Reveal'd* from Heaven, and which is undoubtedly as necessary and indispensable as to its Obligation as the Natural one is, for certainly a Divine Positive Law is as much the Standard of Supernatural Duty as Natural Light is of Common and Natural ones. Let us then not debase the things that are most Excellent, let us not speak flightingly of *Reveal'd Doctrine* and *Precepts*, but own the Evidence and Obligation of these to be equal at least with, if not exceeding those of Moral

Truth

* Essay

Truths and Duties, Those only who have a mean Opinion of the former of these are the Persons that would persuade us that they are surpass'd by Natural Reason and Religion as to Clearness and Certainty.

Of this Number also is that Writer who thus speaks, ** The Precepts of Natural Religion are plain and very intelligible to all Mankind, and seldom come to be controverted: but Reveal'd Truths are liable to the common and natural obscurities and difficulties incident to Words.* Here he disparages Revelation, or the knowledge and discovery we have by it, as Obscure and Uncertain: and it is remarkable what the Reason is that he assigns of this Obscurity and Difficulty, namely, because Reveal'd Truths are convey'd to us by *Words of Writing, by Books and Languages.* Which if we can look upon as a Reason, then all the Opinions of the Philosophers about the Immortality of the Soul, a God, &c. would on the same account be uncertain and obscure: which no Man can pretend to assert, for though some of the Philosophers speak dubiously and waveringly concerning those grand Points, yet it is not uncertain and obscure to the Reader that they do so, for

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* Essay of Humane Understanding, Book 3. Chap. 9.

their Words are plain enough and intelligible: and therefore it is unreasonable to resolve the uncertainty of their Opinions into the Ambiguity of their Writings. The Author goes on, *Whatsoever truth we come to the discovery of from the knowledge and contemplation of our own clear Ideas, will always be certainer to us than those that are convey'd to us by traditional Revelation: for the knowledge we have that this Revelation came from God, can never be so sure as the knowledge that we have from our own clear and distinct Ideas. Which is a very bold and dangerous shock given to Divine Revelation, and to all the Truths contain'd in the Scriptures, for these are represented as less certain and manifest, as to the Truth of them, than the common and ordinary Ideas which we have of things: and yet any considerate Man is not backward to confess that these Ideas prove very false and deceitful sometimes; and as clear and distinct as they seem to be, they are discover'd afterwards to be of another Nature. Notwithstanding this, our Author tells the World that the Knowledge we obtain by these Ideas will always be certainer than that which we can arrive to by what God hath deliver'd in the Inspired*

spired Writings of the Bible. We can't be so sure, he saith, that these are the Word of God, or, as he expresses it, that *this Revelation came from God*, as that our Ideas are clear, and that we have a perfect knowledge by them. And it is observable how he attempts to prove it, by instancing in the *Deluge*, of which he tells us we have not so great an assurance as *Noah* and those that were Eye-witnesses of it. His Words are, *Nobody, I think, will say that he hath as certain and clear a knowledge of the Flood as Noah that saw it, or that himself would have had, had he been then alive, and seen it.* Where I cannot but remark how wide this Instance is from his intended Subject, which was *clear Ideas* of things: but we see he keeps not to his matter in Hand, for he confounds *clear Ideas* and the *sense of Seeing*, and makes them the same. Now then (to pass by the Impertinency) the Proposition which he maintains is this, that Divine Revelation is not so sure and certain as the Testimony of Sense, and he backs it with the example of the *Deluge*, which, it seems, we that find it recorded in *Moses's* Writings, are not so sure of, as *Noah* and the rest that saw it with their Eyes. But by his leave, this is very unsound Doctrine, and no Man of deliberate Thoughts can espouse it, for the Foundation

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dation of our Belief is Divine Testimony, and *that* we are furnish'd with in this case, for we are assured by Revelation that there was such a Flood: so that this discovery made by a Divine Writer is as *firm* and *certain* as that of Bodily Sense: yea, without controversy, it is more firm and certain.

Which is the very thing that is vouch'd by St. Peter, Epist. 2. Chap. 1. where after he had been proving the truth of the Messias's Coming, and that *Jesus* was he, and had confirm'd and demonstrated this by *Eye-witnesses*, ver. 16, and a *voice from Heaven*, ver. 18. he adds those remarkable Words, ver. 19. *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, &c.* We have, saith he a Testimony of the truth of the Gospel which is *more sure* then that of Eye-witnesses or a mere Voice from Heaven, and that is *Prophecy*, namely (as the Apostle explains it afterwards) the Revelation which we have in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament concerning Christ. These Prophecies there relating to him are less liable to be mistaken, or to be counterfeited than the testimony of Sight or Hearing. They are continual standing proofs of the Certainty of Christianity, to which we may always have recourse, so that on this and all other Accounts they are a *more firm and solid Evidence* than that of Cor-

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poreal Sense. Now I appeal to the Reader whether Mr. *Lock* or the Infallible Apostle ought to be credited, the one who peremptorily tells us that Prophecy or Revelation is *not so sure* as the attestation of Sense, or the other who in plain terms acquaints us that it is *more sure*.

To which might be added that plain decision of the case, *Luke 16. 31. If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead,* and visibly appear'd to them. As much as to say, Apparitions and Visions will not effectually move those who are not wrought upon by the standing Writings of *Moses* and other Penmen of Sacred Scripture, where we meet with the most powerful Arguments to convince the Understanding, and the clearest Evidences to beget Faith, and to render it most firm and certain. I hope I need say no more to silence the contrary Opinion: and I had not said so much unless the present Age we live in had required it, for now *Deism* is every where rampant, which is no other then an excessive extolling of Natural Religion, abstract from all Revelation. A *Deist* is one that owns no Scriptures, no Reveal'd or Instituted Religion. Though a Pair of the most eminent of them have violently made their way out of the World of late, yet

there are too many of them yet surviving, who are like to prove very mischievous to our holy Religion: and therefore for their sakes I have enlarg'd on this Head.

When we are then in search after Truth, let us make use of *Written Revelation* as the surest and safest Conduct to it, *To the Law and to the Testimony* (i. e. to the Law which is God's Testimony) let us repair according to that Injunction, *Isa. 8. 20.* and he adjoyns This by way of Reason, *If they speak not according to This Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* The Truth hath not Shined into their Minds, they are in Darkness and Error. Search the Scriptures, saith our Saviour to the Successors of Those Jews, *for in them ye think* (and Rightly ye think) *ye have eternal Life,* i. e. by Them you know the way to Truth, and by That to Life and Happiness. We have heard how *Abraham* said to the Man in the infernal Flames concerning his surviving Friends and Relations? *They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear Them,* i. e. let them Consult the Scriptures: for They are the Best Guide they can follow, They will certainly lead them into the way of Truth and Blessedness. We likewise must judge by This of the Doctrines which are at any time deliver'd to us: by This we may easily discern whether

they

they be True or False, if we will take the pains (as I shall shew afterwards) to apply this Rule aright. This is very clear from those Excellent Apostolick Words, * *Evil Men and Seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived: but continue thou in the things which thou hast learnt, knowing of whom thou hast learnt, and that from a Child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.* And then he immediately adds, *All Scripture* (whether it be that which you have now, or what you shall have afterwards) *is given by Inspiration, and is profitable for Doctrine, &c.* As much as if he had said, the Scripture is and will be the best and most approved Antidote against the Poyson of Error; this will secure you against False Teachers and Seducers, who endeavour to draw you off from the Truth. Read this Holy Volume (but read it as you ought,) and you will soon descry their Cheats and Delusions, but it is impossible to do it without this. For Truth being from God, it must be discover'd and reveal'd by Him, and we have no Revelation of it, but in the Scriptures, (whatever some have hinted of late, that there is another Divine Revelation besides that of Scripture, not known to, or not owned

* 2 Tim, 3. 14.

owned by us of these parts of the World. Mr. N. of Nat. and Rev. Relig. Sect. I. as if the *Southern* parts of the Globe were furnish'd with some other Revelation.) The Bible which we now have contains the whole body of Reveal'd Religion, and therefore it is impossible we should arrive to a notice of Divine Truth without the knowledge of the Written Word of God, which is a Supernatural Discovery.

You see then what are the *Two Channels* in which the streams of Eternal Truth come down to us from Heaven, *viz.* Reason and Revelation, the Light of Nature and of Scripture. Hence ariseth the distinction between *Natural* and *Supernatural Religion*, as was suggested before. The first of these is Born with us, and rooted in our Natures, the second is Reveal'd from Heaven. The Measure of Truth which belongs to Natural Religion is our Own Reason and Moral Principles: but the Standard of that which refers to Revealed Religion is the Holy Bible or Canonical Scripture. And These Two Kinds of Truth, *viz.* of the Understanding and of Faith are no ways Inconsistent, but admirably Agree and hold Correspondence with each other. Reason and Humane Authority lead us unto Divine Authority, *i. e.* Scripture. The same

same Truth is conveyed to us by Both. What is True in One is not Opposite to any Truth in the Other. It was well said by *Seneca*, * that Truth is Always Like it self, yea, is the very Same, on which side of it soever you look. This holds good of *the Truth of Doctrine* (of which I am now speaking) as well as of *Moral Truth* : wheresoever it is, it is the same. Hence the *Jewish* Criticks observe that the Letters which make up the word that signifies *Truth* in the Holy Language are of a quadrate Figure, to intimate (say they) that Truth is a thing solid and firm, unchangeable and immoveable : and they likewise observe from the Word *Emeth, Truth*, which consists of the First and Last and Middlemost of the *Hebrew* Letters, that *Truth* is First, and will be Last, and is the Same all the way : it is Even and Alike, and never Alters. What is True in One Science is not Contradictory to any Truth in an Other. *This witness is True*, † said *St. Paul* of one of *Epimenides* his *Verses* concerning the *Cre- tians* his Countrymen. The *Apostle* Authorizes the *Poet* : what This affirms the Other voucheth : for Truth is the Same by Whomsoever it is spoken. It is true, Scrip-

* Veritas in omnem partem sui semper eadem est. Epist. 180.

† Tit. 1. 13.

Scripture Transcends Reason, but these two do not Clash, and Contradict one another. Though Natural Reason be Silent about the things Revealed, and cannot Reach and Comprehend them, yet the one is not Repugnant to the other. Christianity doth not erase the Reasonable Nature of Man, but hugely Improves and Exalts it. There is a Friendly Union between the Reveal'd Law and that of Nature, between Christianity and the sober dictates of Reason. For Truth is not Opposite to It self, as hath been said: whatever is True in Morality is not Countre to any Truth in the Exalted doctrine of the Gospel. And indeed what is Reasonable is also DIVINE, and Truth wheresoever it appears, is SACRED. Even those very Notices which we have by the Light of Nature are from God, and from his Son Jesus the True Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World, Reason and Faith issue from the same Source of Truth, and if we follow Their Guidance they will infallibly direct us to the Fountain It self. The Former of These indeed is Imperfect, but the Latter is every way Compleat: therefore where Natural Reason faileth us, there Faith must help us out.

Thus then you see we are to trie all Points of Doctrine by these Two, Reason and

and *Scripture*. And as to the latter, This is a Maxim that will not deceive us, that the *Scripture* interpreted by the Best Light God affordeth us is the Only Test of Truth in Religion. We are Cautioned by St. *John*, not to believe every Spirit (i.e. every Doctrine which is pretended to come from the Spirits) but to Try the Spirits whether they are of God, 1 John 4. 1. And he acquaints us elsewhere * that No Lie is of the Truth, i.e. Truth will not be long Misrepresented, it will display it self, and be clearly discerned from Falshood. A Lie being examined by the Rule of Truth will be seen to Disagree with it, and so will easily be Discover'd and Confuted. Reason and *Scripture* are the Rule: hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error. By This all the Controversies between *Papists* and *Protestants* may soon be decided and adjusted. By this all the Disputes and Quarrels among *Protestants themselves* may be quickly hushed and allayed. For if we would know on which side the Truth lies, the only course we can take is to trie both Parties by the Natural Light of Reason, and by that higher one of Revelation.

But how then comes it to pass, you will say, that Men so often miss of Truth, though

* 1 John 2. 21.

though they all pretend to make their trial by these Rules? I will give you a full Account of this by proceeding to the Next Particular I propounded, and which is the Main and Principal thing I designed in this Discourse.

every Doctrine which is pretended to come from the Spirit (but to try the Spirit whether they are of God, 1 John 4. 1. And he acquiesces as elsewhere, that No Error of the Truth is. Truth will not be long misapplied, it will display its self, and be clearly discerned from Falsehood. A Life being examined by the Rule of Truth will be seen to disagree with it, and so will easily be discovered and Confuted. Reason and Scripture are the Rule: hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error. This is the Controversy between Papi and Protestants may soon be decided and answered. By this all the Disputes and Quarrels among Protestants themselves may be quickly solved and stayed. For if we would know on which side the Truth lies, the only course we can take is to try both Parties by the Natural Light of Reason, and by that tryer one of Revelation.

CHAP.

Will say, that Man is often misled, though

CHAP. IV.

The Involuntary Causes of Error are, 1. The Weakness of Humane Understanding. Which Weakness is briefly demonstrated. 2. The Transcendency of the Objects we converse with. 3. The great Variety of Objects. 4. The seeming Resemblance of Truth and Error. This shew'd in Instances of an Inferior, and of an Higher nature. The Voluntary Impediments of Truth and Causes of Error are, 1. Attending to Forgeries and pretended Miracles. 2. Making Success an Argument of Truth. 3. Looking upon Sufferings as a mark of Truth. 4. Relying on the seeming Strictness and Holiness of Mens lives. Antient and Modern Instances of this. The Quakers more particularly consider'd. Matth. 7. 15, 16. explained. Pagans very strict and austere in their lives. The Turks exceed Christians in several things. Some of the Hereticks that seem'd to be very strict and austere, were not really so. Some of them, though they grossly err'd, yet may be presumed in Charity to have been truly Godly.

IN the fourth place we are to see *What it is that stops the Current of Truth, Whence it is that, notwithstanding the assistance*

assistance of *Reason* and *Scripture* which are mercifully vouchsafed us by God, Men are hindred in the pursuit of *Truth*, and unhappily fall into gross *Errors* and *Mistakes*. And because *This* and the *Next* Head of my Discourse are Nearly Allied, and they will necessarily fall in with one another sometimes, I will Unite them both together, and in shewing what are the *Impediments* and *Hindrances* of *TRUTH* I shall at the same time, and with the same Undertaking let you see what are the *Helps* and *Furtherances* of it, and how it may have a Clear and Free Passage down to us. I have made it appear that *Reason* and *Scripture*, the *Law* of *Nature* and the *Positive Law* of *God* are the *Grand Conveyances* of *Truth*. But if it be demanded (as was hinted before) how it comes to pass that *Truth* is so Rare a thing in the *World*, and that *Error* and *Falshood* are so heartily entertained? If it be ask'd, What is the *Reason* of this? I answer, there is certainly no *True Reason* why *Truth* should be slighted and rejected. But there are *Several Causes* of this Unhappy Event in the *World*. The *Causes* then of *Error* are *Twofold*, *Voluntary* and *Involuntary*. I begin with the *Latter* first, viz. the *Involuntary* *Causes* of *Error*: and they are such as These, 1. The *Weakness* and *Po-*

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verty of Humane Understandings. 2. The Excellency and Transcendency of some Objects in our Religion. 3. The Vast Variety of those Objects which we converse with. 4. The Resemblance which Error oftentimes hath to Truth.

1. The Reason why Truth is so seldom discovered; and why Error prevails in the World is because there is so *Great an Imbecillity in Man's Understanding*. The Silly *Indians* heretofore preferr'd Glafs-beads and any such Inconsiderable Toys before their own Solid Gold. That which caus'd them to do so was their Ignorance of the Worth and Value of what they parted with. The same in a manner is the cause why Men generally part with Truth, and barter it away for Error and Falshood. This is to be imputed to their Ignorance: the Debility and Shallowness of their Understandings are much in fault. Alas our Apprehensions are Confused, our Reasonings are Imperfect in This life. They are gather'd for the most part from Probabilities. We Guess at Truth rather than Discover it. * *The Soul* (as a Great Man saith) *is infected by the Phantasms that are before it*, and by the Objects which stir them up. Thence (as a late Ingenious Writer of a neighbouring Nation

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* Βάπτειται ἀπὸ τῶν φαντασμάτων ἡ ψυχὴ. Antonin. l. 3.

complains) *we speak and we write generally according to the different Motions and Passions with which we are agitated: the Objects that most forcibly strike us, represent themselves in a lively manner to our Imaginations, and by that means determine our Tongues to that side.* Du Pin. Bibl. Patr. Pref. Sometimes from a Slight knowledge of those things which our Senses present unto us we make Fond and Childish Conjectures of things which we know not at all, much like that Country Swain who imagined the Famous and Renowned City of Rome to be just such an other place as his Own Ordinary Village. Sometimes it happens that the Natural Ideas and First Principles implanted in Mens Souls are Stifled and Obscured. Or, if they remain Entire, and Shine with their Native Lustre, yet their Deductions from those Principles may be Wrong, whence Error will unavoidably follow. There may be some Insensible Fault in the Contrivance of Mens Arguments, there may be some Flaw in the Logick which they do not perceive. Hence it is oftentimes that their Armour is not so closely girt upon them, but the Enemy finds a way to hurt them, they lying Open in some place which they thought not of. Again, we often find that there is a vast Difference between our Speculations and the

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Execution of things ; Meditation and Operation are Two things, Discourse and Trial are not the same. Many things are Plausible and Feasible whilst they are only in our Conceptions and Thoughts, but they become Useless when we begin to reduce them to Exercise and Practise. Hence it happens sometimes that after we have Laid a long Train of Propositions to Blow up our Adversaries, it will not Take Fire, it will not effect the Work which we intended. If I should here examine the *Triple Operation* of the Mind whereby Truth is generally supposed to be conveyed to us, it would be too Visible that Error may easily surprise us. For first in the *Simple Apprehension* or Bare Representation of Objects to the Mind there may be laid a foundation of Falshood, for there may be a Commixture and Confusion of Apprehensions, so that the Right Conception of the Distinct Essence and Properties of the things may be lost. Or, suppose we Conceive aright, yet the Next Mental Act, which is *Composition*, may be faulty : for we may miscarry in our Connecting of our Simple Apprehensions. And lastly, if These are not duly Joyned together they must needs cause a foul Error in the Next Operation, which is *Discourse* or *Deduction*. Thus there is a Great Difficulty in attaining to True Notions,

because the Passages of Knowledge, and the Ways and Mediums by which Notions are convey'd to us may prove Fallacious. This you may find Illustrated by a Great Wit of This Nation, * who hath admirably shew'd how many Mistakes may be committed in our Conceiving and Judging of things, and how easy it is to be Imposed upon: and he deservedly calls these Mistakes and Fallacies by the Name of *Colours, Insinuations, Popularities, Appearances*. All amounts to This that our Intellectual Faculty is Weak, and apt to be Abused. *Invention* and *Judgment*, the two parts of *Logick* according to the *Ramists*, the very *Urim* and *Thummim* of those pert Logicians, are not such Infallible *Oracles* as they take them to be. Notwithstanding these Great Helps we frequently Argue ourselves into Falshood, and we make use of Reason it self in our Errors. This is a sad and deplorable Conviction of the Meanness and Poverty of our Understandings. This is an Irrefragable Demonstration of what the Apostle saith, that we *Know in Part*, and consequently that we *Prophesy in Part*. Our Ideas and Conceptions of things are very Lame and Imperfect: we labour under an inevitable Weakness

* Lord Bacon. Table of the Colours of Good and Evil.

Weakness of Mind. And this Craziness of our Faculties hinders That *Clear* and *Distinct* Perception of things which the Modern Philosopher makes the Main *negligence* of Truth. And besides this General and Catholick Weakness of Mens Understandings, I might suggest This too that there is in Some Persons a more Particular Defect and Debility. There are some are so weak and so fickle in their Judgments of things that we may be almost enclined to think that their Brains, like those of some other Animals, increase and decrease with the Moon. Their poor fractured Skuls will not permit them to search into any thing seriously, or to concert and adjust any Point that is offer'd to them. The great Hegemonick Faculty in them is so shatter'd that they can give but a lame account of the Objects before them: alas they have but confused shadows of things, and all is mix'd with misprision and mistake. Most certain it is that All Mens Brains are not of an Equal Size. There are Different Makes and Measures of them; and hence there are Different Results of Humane Reason in the same matter. There are Some Men that have a very Poor Stock of Intellectuals. These Weak Brains Mistake, and cannot help it. Hence it must needs be that Some Persons are more obnoxious to Error than others.

2. An Other Cause of Error, especially in the Church of God, is *the Greatness and Transcendency of Divine things*. The Holy Psalmist speaking of These cries out, *Such Knowledge is too Wonderful for me: it is High, I cannot attain unto it*, Psal. 139. 6. There is so little proportion between These Objects and our Darkned Minds that it is impossible we should arrive to a Full and Compleat Apprehension of them. See how it fares in the Bodily Sight; the Excellency of the Object doth oftentimes hinder the Sense and Perception of it. The Gloriousness of the Suns Rays dazzleth our Eyes. So it happens also in the Understanding of things: the Transcendent Nature of some Divine and Heavenly Mysteries which are propounded to us, baffleth our Sight and Perception of them. Whilst we contemplate them we are in a kind of Extasy, and whilst we discourse of them we, like St. Peter at Christ's Transfiguration, *know not what we say*. There are Problems so Thorny and Difficult, so Obscure and Intricate that we are like to search into them with no better success than some of old busied their Brains about the Head of *Nilus*. The most Refined and Exalted Minds cannot find them out to the full. Neither is this any Disparagement to the Study of Divinity, and the Professors of

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it: yea rather it Commends it to us, as a Learned and Profound Writer hath Observed, * who hath these Words, That the Number of Insolable Problems is in Divinity much Greater than in any Other Faculty, this only argues the Subject of it to be more Admirable than the Subject of Other Faculties. So he. We must not then think to Grasp all knowledge of these things. They are Abstruse and Difficult, and therefore it is no wonder that we commonly Err and Mistake about them. Nay sometimes it happens that the more we search into them, the meaner is our Satisfaction: the higher we climb, the more undiscernable is the thing we enquire after; our Understandings herein being not unlike to *Pyramids*, which are smaller and smaller towards the top. We easily falter whilst we Contemplate these Heights, as *Thales's* Foot slipt into the Mire whilst he was taken up with his *Star-gazing*. We in like manner fall into Error when we fix our Eyes on those Heavenly Objects which are at such a distance from us, especially when we do so with an unbecoming Confidence and Presumption. It is the Pleasure of the Almighty that we should not attain to the Height of Knowledge in this Life. It

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* Dr. Jackson on the Creed.

is designed by Providence that we should not so much exercise our Understandings as our Faith. And therefore when we boldly venture to Comprehend these things, it must needs be that we make our selves liable to Error and Delusion.

3. By reason of the *Vast Variety of these Objects which we are to converse with in Religion* it happens that *Truth* is gain'd with Great Difficulty, and Mistakes and Errors are very frequent among Men. Not only the *Excellency* but the *Multitude* of Theological Disquisitions renders the True Account of them to be very Arduous, and almost Impossible. We may say of these as the Masters of *Ethicks* concerning the Virtues and Graces, that *they are Linked together*: there is a continued Series and Chain of them, and one necessarily depends upon another: so that whilst we are entertaining our Thoughts with a Single Idea, others naturally come along with it, as being akin to it; and when we thought to have busied our Minds barely with One Notion, we were soon overwhelmed with Many. There are so Many Different Chases to hunt that it cannot but be extremely hard to afford them All a Due Pursuit. Hence it is that Error becomes Various, and marcheth in Several Divisions. If we were to speak only of *Points of Morality*, That of the

Roman

Roman Oratour would appear to be most true, who said there was nothing so Absurd and Unreasonable but one Philosopher or other made it his Opinion, and Asserted it with great Confidence. As Various as the Objects of their Enquiry were, so divided and multiplied were their Sentiments concerning them. Yea, One Single Object or Theme was able to yield matter for Great Numbers of Opinions. *Varro* had somewhere reckoned up about two Hundred concerning the Chief Good. And Other matters of Moral Religion have afforded as Plentiful a Crop of Perswasions. And thus it is, nay, much more in the *Christian Religion*: for unto That belong not only all Those Moral Heads, but likewise Sundry Other Doctrines and Enquiries which are Peculiar and Proper to It self. Both these together must needs make up a Wonderful Multiplicity of Objects; so that which way soever we cast our Eyes, we cannot want Entertainment for our Thoughts and Meditations. Nay the Variety and Discrepancy of those things will Astonish and Distract Weaker Minds; by which means they will be diverted from a compleat prosecution of Truth, and they will become obnoxious to Error, and imbrace Falshood for Truth. We cannot but miss of this latter sometimes because we cannot

not possibly have Leisure and Opportunity to Attend to that Innumerable Multitude of Subjects, and to take them all into our serious Consideration. Whilst our weak Minds are so glutted and surcharged with them, 'tis no wonder that we cannot Digest them. Hence that which the Patriarch *Abraham* said to the King of *Egypt* (if we may credit a certain * Historian) is verified, viz. that *though Truth be sought with all diligence, yet it is Searcely found.*

4. *The seeming Resemblance of Truth and Error* is an Other Cause of the Mistakes that are among Men. Some Opinions and Doctrines are so Like unto Truth, and have so Near an Alliance to it that we presently imbrace them as really True and Genuine. There are certain *Parelia* which only bear the Image of the True Sun, and do nothing but Ape and Emulate that Glorious Light of Heaven. So some Naturalists tell us of the *Hyena*, which counterfeits the Voice of a Man, and doth oftentimes so exactly Imitate it that it is taken for the Same. So fares it with some Errors in the World: they have a Great Resemblance of Truth, they very much Symbolize with it, and are not seldom
thought

* Καὶ γὰρ ἡ ἀλήθεια γνησίως ζῆλον μάλιστα ἐνεργεῖται.
Cedren. Compend. Hist. or.

thought to be that very thing. I could prove that many Falshoods and Errors are more Plausible than several Truths, and by reason of their Plausibleness and Probability they gain upon the Minds of Men, and are vouched for Truth. You will find one of Great Understanding among the Antients speaking after this manner, * We are none of those who think that there is no such thing as Truth (as some of the Rigidest Scepticks professedly declare,) but yet this is our Perswasion that there is scarcely Any Truth but there is some Falshood tackt to it. It Generally happens that these two are linked together: and it is a Wise Man's Work to Separate and Distinguish one from the other. But because there are but few Wise Men, Truth and Falshood lie Undistinguished oftentimes, and the latter is espoused because it carries some Shew and Likelyhood of the former. This then I assign as One Cause of Mistaken and Perverse Opinions in the Christian World: there are many Notions which seem very Specious and Probable, but upon enquiry are found to be far remote from what is True. Falshood comes in the

* Non enim sumus ij quibus Nihil Verum esse videatur, sed ij qui omnibus Veris Falsa quædam adjuncta esse dicamus, &c. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 1.

the Dress and Attire of Truth, and then 'tis hard to know one from the other in that Disguise. Yea, Error assumes not only the Garb but the Name of Truth, and having taken her Name it is Disguis'd now more than before, and Men of an unwary temper salute it and entertain it as Truth it self.

As we see it happens in matters of an Inferiour Nature, so is it also in Theology and Religion, False Names are imposed upon things. To instance in some of the former, among the Vulgar *Briony-roots* form'd into a humane shape pass for *Mandrakes*, and are call'd so. Among others more knowing *Gutta Serena* is the name for a *Black Cataract*, and all Dark-ness. That is call'd *Dragons Blood* which is but the Gum of that Tree. *Crabbs Eyes* are not Eyes, but little Stones that grow in the Heads of *Crevise*, vulgarly call'd *Cray-fish*. And that is said to be the *Spawn of a Whale* which is found about the Head of that Animal, or, as others say, is a particular foam of the Sea, and floats upon it like Froth. A Medicine which hath no *Opium* in it is sometimes call'd an *Opiate*. Among Anatomists that is call'd a * *Vein* which is an *Artery*, and on the other side that is falsly call'd an * *Artery*

* *Vena arteriosa.*

* *Artery* which is a *Vein*. And so *Os Sacrum* is the Name of the most *Ignoble bone* in the body. Among Herbalists Words and Names of things are ill bestowed when a Stinking Weed or Dead Nettle is call'd *Archangel*, and when a † Common Herb is stiled *Halelujah*. In other things I could shew how False Names are given, as the *Sea* which is out of measure Troubled and Tempestuous (as *Drake* found it) is call'd *Pacifick*. The *Saracens*, who are the posterity of *Hagar* and *Ismael*, and not of *Sarah*, yet are Named from Her. Innumerable Instances might be given of this sort: but in these there is no Harm done, although the Names of things be not according to the Things. The Error is not of any Considerable Influence. But I can not say so of those False Names and Characters of Virtues and Vices, of Graces and Duties, of Perswasions and Opinions which are too frequent in Religion. Men commonly Judge of Doctrines by the *Names* which some Persons fasten on them, and thereby are dangerously Misled. This *Misnomer* (as our *Lawyers* would call it,) this Nominating amiss, this using one Name for another is frequent, I say, among all Pretenders

* *Arteria venosa.*† *Wood-forrel.*

tenders to Religion. The *Romanists* set off all their Heresies and Falshoods with the plausible name of the *True Catholick Church*. There were *Hereticks* that call'd themselves *Apostolicks*. A *Confederacy* of the *Papish* Princes against the *Protestant* Cause was surnamed a *Holy League*. The brethren of *Cracovia* commend their Opinions to the World under the specious title of *Reason*: and in this they are followed by some of the *Remonstrants* in some things. The *Antinomian* disguises his pernicious Errors under the colour of *Free Grace* and *Exalting of Christ*. And others, whom I could mention, have ways of deceiving themselves and others with fair pretences and mistaken denominations of things. Generally Men do not call things by their right Names, they represent them for that which they are not, but only have a shew of, which makes them more contemptible, as the Ape is the more ridiculous because he resembles a Man. But by this Artifice it happens that Men are not only Deluded, but even when they hug Error they think they are in the imbraces of Truth. Like as when we have suffered much in a Dream, and have lain a long time under the false fancies which it filled our Heads with, when we Awake and begin to Rouze our selves, and to Consider whether

whether the Representations which we had were True or no, we have much to do to shake off the fancy of their being Really True: the Impressions are still strong upon us, and with great Difficulty it is that we throw them aside, and conclude at length that it was but a Dream. In a Resembling manner the delusions of Error work upon us: though they are but Dreams and Idle Fancies, yet they are Imprinted in our Thoughts under the Name of Truth, or at least they are in some things Near akin to it, and bear the Resemblance of it, and by this means they thrust themselves upon us, and cannot easily be put off, and it is a Long time before we can perfectly discern them to be mere Fancies and Delusions. Our business therefore must be to awaken our selves thoroughly, and to bring our selves to a distinct apprehension of things, and not to suffer our selves to be deluded by mere Names. To shut up this Head, let us remember that Falshood inventeth Names to Impose upon the World with all, but it must be our Care to Judge of Truth not from the Names and Terms applied to things by some Men, but from the Nature of things themselves. As we must not refuse Truth because it hath sometimes a Shew of the Contrary, so we must not imbrace Error because it
car-

carries some Resemblance of Truth.

Now, upon the Consideration of the Several Particulars already mentioned to you, it is no wonder that, after all the Care which we have taken, it falls out sometimes that we are not in full Possession of Truth. There are Several Causes to be assigned why we do not come to a knowledge of All Truth, and why we are so liable to Errors and Mistakes. Error (as I have shewed you) is occasion'd by something in the Objects we are conversant about, and something also in our Understandings. The things themselves, or our Brains are in fault. Those are Many and Difficult, and these are Weak: besides that we are imposed upon by false Names and Misrepresentations of things. Hence it is that Many Propositions will ever remain Obscure, and the Purchase of Truth will be no Easy Attainment. But herein we may Comfort our selves that we shall not Answer for the Weakness of our Understandings, and the Difficulty of the Things themselves, but only for those things which are Voluntary, and which we could help. But alas our Comfort is eclipsed by this dreadful Consideration, that we Wilfully contribute to our entertaining of Error. Though we shall not Answer for our Shallow Intellects, yet herein we are Faulty that we Use them
not

not Aright. The Imperfection and Weakness of our Reason shall be excused, but the Abuse of it shall be laid to our Charge. We Voluntarily wander from the Truth. As the same *Hebrew* word signifies to Delight and to Err, so we are guilty too often of joyning Both Senses together. Error is Pleasant and Delightful to us. They tell us that in *Basil* (a famed City in *Switzerland*) the Clocks do always strike an hour too soon, and yet the People will not correct the Mistake. It is just so with Multitudes of Men in respect of Opinions and Doctrines in Religion: their Judgments go wrong, and strike false: but they willfully let them alone, and take no care to correct them. They promote Error out of Choice, and frankly imbrace it although they are able to prevent and hinder it. It enters into their Wills and Affections, and then makes them shut their Eyes, and refuse to discern Truth.

And so I am led directly to the Second Rank of Causes, viz. the *Voluntary Causes of Error* (as hitherto I have been Treating only of those which are *Not Voluntary*.) Men then professing Religion have run themselves into Error by these following Means, 1. By Attending unto Wonders and Miracles. 2. By looking at the Success and Prosperity which accompany their

their Opinions and Ways. 3. By thinking that Suffering is an infallible Test of Truth. 4. By attending to the seeming Strictness and Holiness of those whose Opinions they like. 5. By giving too Great Respect to the Authority of Men. 6. By over-valuing of Antiquity. 7. By indulging an unruly Fancy, and nourishing of Enthusiasm. 8. By a fond Affectation of Obscurities. 9. By a Love of Quarrelling and Disputing. 10. By running into Extremes. 11. By Prejudice arising either from Education, or Custom, or any other thing. 12. By fostering Extravagant Affections and Passions. Again, by willful Neglecting to search into Truth. Lastly, by leading a Wicked and Ungodly Life. Of all which *Causes* I will distinctly discourse, and, as I am passing from one Head to another, I will continually insert the Proper Remedies against the Maladies I discover.

First, Some are observed to attend unto *Forgeries* and *Pretended Wonders* and *Miracles*, and thereby they delude themselves into *Error*. They are of that Platonists Mind who said, * There are many things which are neither True nor Possible, which yet it is Profitable to Believe.

* Πολλά γὰρ τε καὶ τὰν ὅτι ἀληθῶν, ὅτι δυνατόν
ἀδύνατον περὶ τούτων. Max. Tyr. Dissertat. 24.

lieve. If there be Profit in giving credit to them, it is no matter, say some, what becometh of Truth. The Oracles might deceive, and that laudably, saith the same * Author, for he holds that a Lie is in some case useful, and Truth often hurts. Plato was of this Mind, and the Platonicks, as appears from this Writer, who lets us know that some Men may be best dealt with by propounding Falshood to them sometimes. In an other of the Ancient's Writings we meet with the same Doctrine, whose Words are these, † "It is not possible for a Philosopher with his Speeches to draw on the rabble of Women, and all the Multitude to Religion without making use of some Superstitious ways; and this must be by Fabulous Legends and Fictions, and by doing of Strange Feats. A Party of Men well known in the World use this Expedient, and we see what Cheats and Conterfages in Religion and what Pretences to Miracles are the Consequences of it. It was feign'd that when Romulus was haranguing the People in a publick Assembly, a Tempest took him away,

I 2

and

* Dissert. 3.

† Οὐ γὰρ ὅλον τε γυναῖκιν καὶ πάντων Χυδαῖν, καὶ ἄλλων, ἐπαρῆν λόγον ἀρετῆς φιλοσοφίας ἀλλὰ δὲ καὶ ἐκείνων μυστικῶν καὶ ἀνεν μυθολογίας καὶ τερατείων.
Strabo. Geogr. l. 1.

and so he pass'd for a God, and his Laws were reverenc'd as the Dictates of a Deity. Thus the *Romanists* began with Cheats and Impostures: and those that have succeeded them have mightily improved them, and have made it their business to support their Religion by Fictions. Pope *Boniface* the 8th counterfeited a Message from Heaven, and thereby caus'd Pope *Celestine* the 5th to resign the Papal Chair to him. Whence we may gather that if the *Pontiffs* make nothing of cheating one another, they will not stick to cheat the People, either by pretending of Divine Revelation or Miracles. When it is come to this, they may do what they will with the People, they may fasten any False Perswasion upon them. It is but making some shew of a Miracle, and they may broach what Doctrine they please.

But I pray Observe what was foretold by St. Paul in 2 *Thess.* 2. 9. viz. that the coming of the Man of Sin should be according to the Working of Satan, with all Power and with Signs and Lying Wonders. From whence I gather that False Miracles may accompany the Greatest Cheat and Impostour, and consequently that they are no Certain Badges and Tokens of Truth. Who sees not that they are made use of to Patronize Lies and Falshoods? which

it is probable is the Rightest Interpretation of those terms, *Lying Wonders*. According to the Greek it is * *Wonders of Lying or Falshood*, i. e. Wonders and Miracles to promote and set off Error, Signs and Wonders wrought or pretended to be wrought on purpose to Delude ignorant Souls, to pervert their Minds, and to alienate them from the Truth. And this Meaning of the Words seems to be Confirmed by what follows in the next Verse but one, *God shall send them Strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lie*. What we translate *Strong Delusions* is in the Greek † *Workings of Delusion* or Deceit, which is the same with the *Working of Satan* mentioned before, which is afterwards explain'd by *Lying Wonders*. So then by the *Strong Delusions* I understand This, that God shall suffer some Assemblies of Men to use such Powerful Arts and Impostures, and to make such a shew of Miraculous Deeds that thereby they shall commend their Errors and Pernicious Doctrines to them, and cause them to Believe them: This, I conceive, is the True Import and Sense of those Words: and from thence we may rationally Infer that Working of Wonders and

I 3

seem-

* Τέρας ψεύδους.
† Εέργματα πλάνης.

seeming Miracles is not sufficient to vouch any part of Religion. No Doctrine is to be Believed merely because it is set off with these. The not Crediting of this Proposition hath been a great Hindrance to Truth, and hath occasioned the propagating of some of the Vilest Errors in the World, if the Doctrine of Purgatory, of Praying to Saints, of Worshipping and Praying to the Virgin *Mary* especially may be accounted such. The Persons who had a desire to commend these other Superstitious Doctrines to the World have endeavour'd to do it effectually by buzzing into Mens Ears the Stories of their Romantick Adventures in Religion. Those Church-Mountebanks and Juglers pretended to do *Strange* and *Wonderful* things, such as silly *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* could never attain to: and hereby they bubbled Fools, they abused the Faith of Mankind, they imposed upon the silly Rabble, *the Calves of the People*, especially they abused and deceived their bigoted Profelytes, and make them believe that their Religion had a Divine Stamp upon it. This they are forced to do to shore up their unsound and tottering Cause: and any thing else they are ready to attempt in order to this end.

Secondly, Some fool themselves into the Grosslest Errors by looking at that *Suc-*
cess

cess and Prosperity, and (as they are pleas'd to call it) that Providence which attends their Opinions and Ways. It is a Maxim among the *Turks* generally that whatever Prospers hath God for its Author: and so from their Success in their Wars they have been wont to conclude that their Religion is from God, and Owned by him. The *Jews* cannot plead this Argument; their Mouths are stopp'd, their Nation and Church being wholly Shatter'd and Ruin'd: and if there be any thing like Success among them, it is only in their Merchandize and Usury in foreign Countries. There are among *Christians* also such who boast of Prosperity as one mark of a True Church (for in this as in some other things they run Parallel with the followers of *Mahomet*.) But all that I shall say is, that the Church of Christ in the Apostles times and two Hundred years after labouring under Extreme Sufferings and Persecutions, could not plead outward Peace and Prosperity as an Argument of their being the True Church; and yet every Christian Man grants that the Church at that time had Truth on its side. Why then should any Persons make use of such an Argument to prove themselves the True Church whereby they Unchurch the Primitive and Purest Church of Christ? I might here Reason the Case,

and make out by undeniable Proof that Success is not an infallible Mark of Truth. I might shew how Accountable it is that God should suffer Error and Falshood to Prosper sometimes, and that the Truest and Soundest Doctrines should be Blasted, and those that own and defend them be evilly treated. Besides, suppose that Seducers have at present the Wind in the Poop, and go on and prosper, it may not be thus with them afterwards, but they and their Cause may be extirpated. The glittering *Son of a Star* may be turn'd into the *Son of a Lie*, the Impostor may be discover'd and disgraced, and hiss'd off the Stage. We have assurance from the *Apocalyptick* Writings that *Babylon shall fall*, that both the Eastern and Western Antichrist shall be confounded: and as for those other lesser Sects and Impostures that are in any part of the World, and appear with a Splendid Train and Equipage, and are now flush'd with Success, they cannot promise themselves *Halcyon* days always: their period may be very nigh, and then what will they have to plead for the *Truth* of their Cause? how will they blush to prove it from the Train that follows it? But I hope there is no need of Inlarging on This Point. I have already set the Standards of Truth: We must Trig it by the Word of the Living God,

God, and by Rectified and Unbiaſſed Reason, and not by the Prosperous State which ſeems to attend it.

Thirdly, Others on the contrary think *Suffering* to be an aſſured Teſt of *Truth*. If they ſee Men undergo Great Dangers and Loſſes for the defence of their Opinions, they are preſently inclined to believe them to be True. For they bring themſelves, I know not how, to This apprehenſion, that Theſe Perſons would not, or rather could not ſuſtain thoſe vaſt Loſſes and Sufferings, unleſs it were in defence of that which they know to be True. Whierfore upon their undergoing ſuch things they conclude that there is, and that there can be no Error and Miſtake in that Doctrin which they ſo maintain. But This it ſelf is a Great Miſtake, and ſuch a one as hath proved very Miſchievous and Fatal in the Church. To prevent this Miſchief let this be Obſerved that the Apoſtle Suppoſeth that a Man may give *his body to be burnt*, i. e. Suffer in an Extraordinary manner, and yet *have not Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. Now if he may Suffer, and yet be devoid of *Charity*, we have as good reaſon to think that he may Suffer and at the ſame time be deſtitute of *Truth*: eſpecially when we conſider that Suffering doth not give a Man an Aſſurance of the Truth of the Do-

Doctrine which he Suffers for. Let us look to it then that we do not make Suffering the Measure and Rule of Truth. Let us not think that the Venturous and Hazardous Undertakings of our selves or others, in behalf of such and such Opinions, are a Convincing Proof of the Truth and Certainty of them. *Eusebius* * informs us that those Perverse Hereticks the *Montanists* bragg'd that they had many *Martyrs*, and he tells us that they made that an Argument of their being in the Truth. So did the *Circumcellians*, *Manichees*, and *Donatists*: and in later times several have unreasonably made the Sufferings of their party the greatest test of their being Orthodox. If they have pass'd this *Fire Ordeal*, they concluded them to be Men of Truth and Innocency. But if this be a good inference, then from *Vaninus's*, *Servetus's*, and our *Vener's* patient suffering death, we might argue for Atheism, and against Christ's Divinity, and for the lawfulness of Murder and Bloodshed when they are acted in the Name of King Jesus. This then I assert that when we come to make Trial of the Truth of Religion we cannot absolutely and infallibly Argue from the Sufferers which it hath: this is not a Sound and

* Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.

Undeniable Attestation of it. But first of all we must Examine the Doctrine which the Sufferers maintain, yea even with their Blood: and if we find this to be according to Holy Scripture (which is the Main Standard of Truth,) then we may vouch it for Truth, and reckon the Sufferings of those Persons to be a Strong Attestation and Confirmation of it. This is the True Method we must proceed in, and we shall be sure not to be misled into Error by it. Thus I have *briefly* touch'd on Three of the abovenamed Heads: I will insist more *Largely* and *Amplly* on those which follow.

Fourthly, Then, Others are deceived by a *Seeming Stridness* and *Holiness*, and so are betray'd into *Gross Errors*. Thus the *Pharisee* being very Mortified Creatures as to Appearance, they being taken notice of for their Demure Looks, for their Long Prayers, for their frequent Fasting, and other solemn Exercises of Devotion, the People by this means conceiv'd a Good Opinion of them, and of their Doctrine, and many Profelytes were gain'd to their Perswasion. So the Apostle acquaints the *Corinthians* (2 Cor. 11, 13.) that the *False Apostles* and *Deceifful Workers* which were at that time among them *Transformed themselves into the Apostles of Christ*, i. e. their Lives were as seem-

seemingly Holy as those of the True Apostles. *And no marvel* (saith he, in the next Verse,) *for Satan himself is Transformed into an Angel of Light.* Therefore it is no Great thing (i. e. to be Wondred at) if his Ministers also be Transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness. The Diabolick Spirit may come in Maskerade; the Prince of Darknes may appear like a Bright Seraphin. And those whom he sends to abuse the World, do oftentimes present themselves in such a Shape: and this they more especially choose to do when they design to infect Mens Minds with Errors, and to enervate the Truth of the Gospel. Thus we have it from the same Infallible Writer (1 Tim. 4. 3.) that the Hereticks, False Prophets and Seducers of the Latter Times shall pretend to Extraordinary Austerity and Mortification: they shall profess such Purity that *Marriage and Meats* will not be tolerated by them. And we have Assurance from Ecclesiastical History that this Prophecy of the Apostle was fulfilled, for we read that the Hereticks in the succeeding Ages were Noted for their Severity and Strictness of Life: and by that means they seduced many from the Truth. There were the *Encratites*, Hereticks that had their Name from *Continence*, who very carefully abstained from Women,
Wine,

Wine, and Flesh. There were the *Praying Hereticks*, who thence had the Name of *Euchitæ*, a sort of Men that spent all their time in Devotion. *Montanus* was a Man of a very Austere Life, and so were his Disciples, which drew *Tertullian* over to them. The *Priscillianists* were seemingly more Holy than others. The *Apostolici* in the third Century call'd themselves so because they said they follow'd the steps of the Apostles : they were a sort of *Encratitæ*, very Strict and Severe in their behaviour ; they were also stiled *Ἀσκητικοί* because they pretended to Abandon and Renounce the World. Of the *Macedonians*, a sort of Hereticks that denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, *Gregory Nazianzen* saith thus, * We admire their Lives and Manners ; yet notwithstanding that we do not altogether approve of their Doctrine. The *Manichees* were Extraordinarily Precise, more then the Orthodox Christians ; in so much that their Wonderous Sobriety and Strictness of Life tempted *Augustin* (as he saith himself) to fall into their Sect. *Pelagius* was a Person of an Exact Conversation, and of a very forward Zeal, and many of his followers were very severe in their man-

* Τὸν βίον θαυμάζοντες, ἐν ἐπαινῶν πάντῃ τὸν λόγον. 44. Orat.

manners. So likewise the *Novatians*, the *Cathari*, and the *Donatists* were all pretenders to a Stricter Sanctity than Others, and some of them were really and justly famed for a great and extraordinary Severity of Life. Now, it is not to be denied that the Errors and Heresies of these Men were promoted and upheld by the Severity and Over-strictness of the Lives of those that were the Ringleaders of these Errors. By their Extraordinary Praying and Fasting, by their vitifying of Matrimony and crying up of a Single Life, by their continual Remonstrances against the sensual Delights and Pleasures of the World, and by Other Austerities of the like nature they won Men and Women over to their Fond Opinions and Pernicious Doctrines. They knew they could draw but few Disciples after them if they lived loosely; wherefore they seem'd to be pure and holy, to be zealous and pious, and to make a shew and profession of Godliness. This hath been a frequent Stratagem of the profess'd Adversary of Mankind, and by this artifice Error and Heresy have been propagated; and the feigned Holiness of false Teachers hath effectually promoted their falshoods.

In imitation of these Antient Hereticks there have been some Modern Decivers and False Teachers, who have wonderfully

fully gained People to their Perswasions by a shew of more than Ordinary Sanctity. By this means Many have been perswaded to imbrace the Errors of the Church of *Rome*: for there they Observe Long Fastings, Whippings, Watchings, and variety of Severe Penances, besides among those who are of the *Monastick* Order profess'd Poverty, Continual Celibacy, &c. *Ignatius Loiola* and many other great Men of that Communion have been famous for their contempt of the World, for their fortitude of Mind, their incessant fatigues and labours, their seeming Zeal for the glory of God and the promoting of Religion. Hence there are those that conclude this to be the *Holy Catholick Church* indeed: and this *Holy Church* (say they,) which is made up of such Austere and Mortified Persons, yea, which hath afforded so many Canonized Saints, cannot be destitute of the Truth. Among these Sanctified Souls Error can have no harbour; therefore whatever Doctrine they teach, we may safely imbrace and acquiesce in. Thus the worst of Errors are swallowed down through the Confidence which these Men put in the Seeming Strictness and Piety of their Party. The same might be observed concerning the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*, who despised the Ordinary rate of Sanctity which

which they saw in Other Persons, and undertook to be more Strict and Precise every way, and to set a pattern of Refined and Exalted Holiness: yet all Sober and Intelligent Persons saw that this was but a Politick Device to Commend their Doctrines and Opinions, and consequently to propagate the Pernicious Errors with the greater success. Both *Letius* and *Faustus Socinus* were eminent for their Moral Endowments, the latter especially was famed for his Modesty, Humility, Courtesy, Liberality, and his great Zeal for that Cause he was engaged in, and his indefatigable Industry and Patience. But who sees not that these charming Qualities were helpful to him in that design which he was carrying on, of subverting the grand Principles of Religion, and establishing new ones of his own? Amongst our selves there are many Men of unsound Principles, and great advancers of Error and Heresy, and yet they are very precise and mortified as to outward appearance, they fast and pray with great Devotion, and abhor the practise of all Scandalous Vices, and even deny themselves in many lawful and indifferent things.

To instance in those deluded Souls called *Quakers*, they are very strict and precise in their looks, garb, speeches, behaviour

viour above other Persons, and make great shew of Sobriety and Self-denial. Whilst they talk much of a *Light within them* they do not neglect the Outward Lustre and Shining of their Lives. Whilst Men and Women of all other Persuasions (to their shame be it spoken) are given too much to a Vain affecting of Fashions, to Pride of Apparel, to Lightness, Wantonness and Luxury, things hugely unbefitting their Holy Profession, these Persons in the mean time obtain from these Sins of the Times, and declare against the Vanities of the Age. I have read some of their Books (as *Barclay's*, &c.) with great delight, wherein they exhort to Self-denial, abandoning of Carnal Pleasures, Worldly Lusts and Vanities, and all Excess, and this with great Warmth and Zeal, and in pathetick and choice Words. They excellently represent Temperance, Chastity, Gravity, Humility, and other Moral Accomplishments: they worthily Extol a Virtuous Life, and fall into some Noble Raptures and Heights whilst they are doing so; In a word, they seem to breathe nothing but a Divine Life and Heaven. Yet notwithstanding this, what Unchristian Principles, what Horrid Fashions are maintain'd by these Men? A short draught of their Pernicious Errors may be thus represented to our thoughts

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and memories, They affirm that all Men are enlighten'd with Divine Light, and equally partake of the Spirit. They hold that this Divine Spirit doth not reveal the Knowledge of Jesus Christ to them, nor is it necessary, because the knowledge of Christ is no necessary part of Religion. They laugh at the Meritorious Righteousness of *Christ*, they deny his Divinity, they utterly disown his Satisfaction, they allow of neither of the Sacraments of Christ's Appointment. They confidently assert an Absolute Perfection in this Life, and so make way for Merits and Supererogation. They think and speak contemptibly of the Holy Scriptures, and will by no means allow them to be a Perfect Rule of Judgment and Practice. They vilify the Bible as much as some of the Church of *Rome* do, yea, they make their own Writings equal with the Holy Scriptures. These are the Capital Errors they foster and maintain, besides many other Wicked and Impious Tenents upheld by them, whereby they seem to expunge themselves out of the Number of *Christian Men*. Now, who sees not that their seeming Strictness, their external shew of Mortification and Sobriety are a mask for these Errors and Fallhoods? I mean they are so intended by the Evil Spirit who actuates them, and by the Ringleader

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and Designing Men of the Party: for as for the rest, I hope and believe that they are misled through Ignorance, Simpleness, and Inadvertency: and therefore I heartily pity them, and pray for them, and wish they may not suffer hereafter for their Mistakes and Delusions here. But this is certain (which is the thing I am now speaking of) that many of them by their outward Demureness and Plausible Demeanour win upon unstable Souls: whereby they put off their Lives and Impositions with the greater advantage, they disperse their Damnable Doctrines in a more successful manner. We have by experience found it true that this seeming Holiness hath not a little influenced on the Minds of some well-meaning Persons, and that their Errors have been effectually propagated thereby, their External Sanctity hath conciliated them a reverence among some unwary Beholders, and by this means they have been able to bring over several to their side, to gain considerable Numbers to that Sect.

Let us then lay this down as a certain Verity that Outward Strictness and Austerity are no standing Rule, no infallible Sign of Truth. This I will make Good from these Words of our Saviour in Mat. 7.15. *Beware of false Prophets, who come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they*

are *ravening Wolves*. By *false Prophets* Christ means any *false Teachers*, who delight in Lies, and love to pervert the Truth of the Gospel: he calls them *Prophets* because they oftentimes pretend to a spirit of Prophecy and Revelation above others. These, saith our *Saviour* come in *sheeps clothing*, that is, their external shew shall be very Innocent and Harmless, they shall look like sheep; yea, even in their Outward Clothing and Garb they shall make shew of a kind of Innocence. As to their Actions, they shall seem very Inoffensive; they shall be very Meek and Mild; they shall be no Fighting Men by any Means: in short, they shall appear more Strict in their Lives than others. So *St. Jerom.* on the place interprets it. And the Practice of False Teachers and Seducers in the Church hath vouched the Truth of it. They pretend to Greater Self-denial and Mortification than the Apostles themselves ever did. But all this is to Palliate their evil Designs: the Sheeps Clothing is to hide the Wolfish Nature, the Savage and Brutish temper. As Wolves are to the Sheep, such are they to Christ's Flock. they tear and devour the Church by the False and Erroneous Doctrines which they spread abroad. Therefore when our Saviour adds, in the Verse immediately following that which

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I named last, *Ye shall know them by their fruits*, he means there by *Fruits* their Evil Doctrines, their wilful perverting of the Truth by Teaching Errors and Falshoods. This must needs be the sense of Christs words, for he having said that *they come in Sheeps Clothing, i. e. they make a shew of Innocent Lives and Conversations*, he cannot understand by *Fruits* (as some, I perceive, do) their *Outwards Works and Behaviour*, for by *them* they cannot be distinguish'd from the Best Men and the Truest Prophets and Servants of God; therefore it is most Reasonable to assert that by *Fruits* are to be understood here the *Pernicious Doctrines*, the Seeds of Error which they sow in the World. Though we cannot know them (i. e. distinguish them from the Sincerest Saints) by their Lives and Outward Deportment, yet hereby we may know how to distinguish between *them* and *those*, viz. by Observing what *Doctrines* they preach, what *Principles* they instil, or (to speak plainly) what *Errors* they maintain. Thus ye shall know them by their *Fruits*. And hence it is Rational to Infer that we ought to be Careful that we do not embrace *False Doctrine* for *True*, because it is deliver'd to us by some who pretend to and make a great shew of an *Honest Life*. We must not be

Wheadled into Error by this Artifice. Truth is not to be tried by Mens Lives, but by the Word of God and Impartial Reason.

I could tell you that even among *Pagans* there have been Men of very Strict Behaviour: *Apollonius Tyaneus*, one of the greatest Impostors, was a very Retired Person, and was noted for his Abstinence and other Acts of Mortification. The *Indian Brachmans* were extreme Temperate in their Diet and could not be tempted to tast of Wine or any Strong Drink. My Author tells me that in *Siam* (a Kingdom of the *East Indies*) he that drinks Wine is stoned to death. And their *Religious Orders* at this Day are so Strict that it is Death among them to Speak to a Woman. I read also that in *Japan* (another Kingdom in that part of the World) some of their Religious people lie continually in Narrow Holes and Cells, and spend all their time in Fasting and Praying till they die. Now shall we therefore have a Good Opinion of These Mens Idolatrous and Pagan Worship, and shall we believe them to be in the Right Way, because they are so extraordinarily Temperate and Sober, Severe and Self-denying, and because they renounce those Vanities which many Christian Men indulge themselves in? I leave you Judge whether This be Reason-

Reasonable. And from hence we may judge further whether the Lives of Seducers and Impostors in Religion ought to prevail with us to imbrace their Pernicious Doctrines.

Here also I could add that if an Outward Shew of Religion be the Main thing whereby we are to Try the Truth, then the *Turkish* Religion may be chosen before Christianity. For, -as for the Founder of it himself, we read that after he had spent a great part of his Life in Merchandizing, he left it off, and became a Hermit. He not only quitted the Pagan Idolatry of his Country in which he was bred, but he betook himself to a most austere way of Devotion, and lived two years a solitary and contemplative life in a Cave. Thence he issued forth, and set up for a Prophet, and headed a Sect, that which was afterwards and is to this day called by his Name, the Vile Imposture of *Mahometism*. Next, to speak of his followers, from what I have met with in the Historical Accounts of Those People I must declare that they far Exceed us in some things. They are very Sparing in their Meat and Drink: no Wine must be taken down. They are Grave and Sober in their Speeches and Conversations: they affect not to be Sumptuous in their Buildings. Their

Alcoran gives them Precepts against Swearing. They are very Punctual in their Words and Bargains, and will not make many Words in buying and selling. They are so averse to all Idolatry that they are against the making and carrying of any Images, and against Painting of Pictures. And in These very things our *Quakers* boast that they go beyond others. These *Turks* (to go on still with their Character) are not so given to Wrangling and Quarreling as We generally are. They are for the most part most Just and Upright in their Dealings. Those that have seen them at the *Moschs* (i. e. their Temples) assure us that they appear to be more Devout and Zealous in their Prayers: and the Men and Women are not placed promiscuously together at that time, as in use among us. As for their Apparel, it comes not near Ours in Vanity, Levity and Costliness. Lastly they have been noted for their Unstained Loyalty to their Emperor. Now after all these Particulars, let me ask you whether These Commendable things in the Lives of *Mabometans* ought to persuade you to Approve of their Doctrines? Shall some Severity of Manners among them incline you to imbrace their Religion, and to think it to be the True one? Shall a fair gloss of Morality induce you to

to take the Alcoran for your Creed, and to Believe in their Prophet *Mahomet*? Will you upon this account change the *Cross* for the *Crescent*, and prefer Mahometism to the Institution of the Blessed *JESUS*? There is no Wise and Considerate Person will think This to be Allowable. And what is the Reason that he thinks so? Is it not This, because an Outward Honesty, nay a Great Strictness and Severity of Life is not the Touchstone whereby we are to make Trial of the Truth of any Doctrine, and because it is sometimes the Devil's Stratagem to put off Falshood, Error, and Delusion under a specious Pretence and Shew of Holiness: they who design to Deceive do frequently appear very Pious and Religious, to gain Profelytes to their Doctrine.

But here This must be said, that though some of the worst Seducers and False Teachers have seemed to be holy, yet they were never Really so. Whilst they pretended to more than Ordinary Sanctity, their Lewd Practices confuted their Pretences. Thus some of the Demurest Hereticks have been observed to have indulged some Known Folly and Vice. Several of them had their Female Familiars in imitation of the First Arch-Heretick *Simon Magnus*, whose Associate was *Helena*,

a shameless Woman. *Carpocrates* had *Marcellina*, *Severus* (an Heretick in *Commodus's* reign) had one *Philumena*: *Montanus* had *Prisca* and *Maximilla*, who forsook their Husbands to follow him, and became his Harlots. It was observed of this *Montanus* that he Condemn'd Second Marriages as unlawful, and yet he allowed of Whoredom and Incest. It is said that *Donatus* had his *Lucilla*, who was a Woman of a Lewd Life. Thus though the worst of Hereticks have been cried up for the Strictness of their Lives, yet in one thing or other they have betrayed themselves to be but Hypocrites, for they have indulged themselves in some beloved Vice, and have made no Conscience of acting very scandalously as to some things. These Seducers are like those Dæmons you read of in the * Gospel who *kept among the Tombs*, they seem to have abandoned the World, and to be even Dead to it, and to converse with nothing but Death and the Grave. But as Those were cast out into the Swine, a fit Emblem of their Uncleaness and Filthiness, so These seemingly Pure and Mortified Men discover at length their Impurity and Corruption, and too plainly demonstrate that they are Alive to Sin and the World. Yet

Yet Lastly I will add this, that I deny not that Some Hereticks (*Some* I say, and it may be of those before named, and of Others whose Judgments have been very Erroneous) have, notwithstanding That, been Men of True Holiness and Integrity of Life. For if it seemeth Good to God to permit the Holiest Persons to fall sometimes into very Great Misdemeanours in their Practices, he may also suffer them to be Grossly Misled as to their Opinions and Judgments; he may let them be carried away for a time with False and Erroneous Doctrines. This is the Unhappy Case of Several truly Virtuous and Godly Souls. But then, as no Man ought to make the Vices and Immoralities of Good Men his Pattern, or to defend Vice because Good Men fall into it, so neither ought any Person to follow the Errors of the Best Men, or to assert them to be True, because Men of the Holiest Lives have sometimes espoused them. As Seeming Holiness is not a Certain Sign of Truth, so neither is Real and Unfeigned Sanctity in any Man an undeniable Evidence and Proof that the Doctrines which he imbraceth are True.

CHAP. V.

Another Voluntary Impediment of Truth, and Cause of Error is a giving too great respect to Authority. Great Men are not to be the Standards of Truth. Error caus'd by adhering to such. Learned Men are not Absolute Conductors to Truth. This shew'd in lesser and greater Instances. In what respects Learning is not an absolute Qualification for the discovery of Truth. Learning mistaken. Good Men, whether seemingly such or really so, are not the Infallible Guides of our Faith. The Apostles themselves err'd in several Points. The Primitive Fathers not exempted by their Holiness from Mistakes. Nor the Modern Reformers. Truth is not to be taken on Trust. St. Augustin's Saying consider'd. The Many are not to be our Guides. In several Instances of an inferior Nature it is shew'd that the Opinion of the Most is Erroneous. The same is evinced from Examples of a higher Nature. Multitude no Argument of Truth. The reason why the Most are generally thought to be in the Right.

5ly. **A**N Other Impediment of Truth and promoter of Error is a giving too Great Deference and Respect to the Authority of Men, and believing Doctrines merely because such Persons assert them.

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You may remember that when I assigned Reason to be One Channel of Truth, I comprehended under it the *due use of Humane Authority and Testimony*. Reason is much improved as well as Conducted by These, and therefore the Antient *Creeds, Councils, and Writings* of the *Fathers* are highly Reverenced by Wise Men, and the *Universal Consent* of the Church of Christ is allowed as a Good Argument by all Sober Persons: and they are to be look'd upon as Fond and Deluded People who prefer their own Private Judgments and decisions to the United Suffrage of the Universal Church. But yet it is Evident that some of the *Fathers* and Antient Writers have favour'd *Errors*, and that under the *Pretence of Authority* very Great Errors have obtain'd among Christians. Who sees not that the *Papists* plead *Authority*, and yet most of their Corruptions and Errors are founded on *That one Thing*. The Learned Men of that Church resolve upon it to defend such Opinions, and to answer all Arguments and Objections against them, as are built on *AUTHORITY*. They come with a full purpose to maintain (right or wrong) whatever the Learned Fathers and Doctors of the Church assert. They give themselves up wholly to be Guided by Them, and *Scripture* is laid aside. Besides

sides the *Church of Rome* there are Other Parties of Men who rely with Great Confidence upon the Opinion, and Determination of such *Authors* as they Like; and by this means they imbrace very palpable Falshoods. Here then I hope I shall do service to *Truth* by shewing you the Danger of this common Proceeding, and I will let you see *What Authorities* of Men are to be suspected by us. When we are then about our Enquiry into Truth, let it be remembred that neither the *Great*, nor the *Learned*, nor the *Good*, nor the *Many* are Absolutely to be confided in. These four things I will Distinctly insist upon.

I. If you heartily wish for the Attainment of Truth, make not *Great Men* the Absolute Standards of it. This Caution ought to be inculcated on our Minds, because it is so Usual a thing for Persons to be led by the Authority and Example of *Great Ones*. *Do any of the Rulers believe?* cried the *Pharisees*, John 7. 48. as if Their Opinion and Belief were a Rule and Measure for all the rest: as They believ'd, so Every one else was to do. But seeing the *Chief Men* and *Rulers* imbraced not Christ's Doctrine, they would perswade the *People* that *they* must not do it: or if they do, they are accursed, for immediately after those Words, *Do any of*
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the Rulers believe in him? it follows, this People who know not the Law are cursed, ver. 49. this ignorant Rabble, these Boors, these Clowns (the dregs of the Commonwealth and of Manners too) refuse to follow their Leaders and Governours and therefore deserve a Malediction. Of all the Pharisees there is none but Nicodemus, of all the great Statesmen there is none but Joseph of Arimathea that hath any inclination to Christianity, and yet this rascally People will be hankring after it, and will not submit to the Conduct of their Rulers. This was the goodly Argument which the Jewish Doctors used against our Saviour and his Holy Institution. It hath been thus in succeeding Ages; this is one great reason why there hath been so little Truth, viz. because Men wholly conduct their Notions and Sentiments by those of their Superiours. Turcism is kept up thus, this is it which upholds the Popes Tripple Crown, and props up the Roman Cause. I read that the Emperour and some of the German Princes at the Reciting of the Lutheran Confession at the Imperial Diet at Aupsurg told some of the Lutheran Perswasion that they were Inclined to Sign that Confession, and wish'd with all their Hearts that it did Prevail in the World. If the Pope would set it forward, they could

could Like it, but they Scorned to receive it from the Hands of a *Rau-oney* Friar, meaning *Luther*. This is as Fair an Instance of the Particular which I am now insisting upon as can be desired. These Princes retain'd the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* because of the *Pope's Authority*, than which they thought there could not be a Greater. *Martin's* Doctrine would not go down with them because the *Pope* was not for it. They rejected *Lutheranism* because it was set on foot by a Poor Sorry Friar. If the Bishop of *Rome* would think fit to set it up, then they would Own it, and it should pass for *Truth*. This is as much as to say (which is Horrid Blasphemy) that the Pope can Make Truth, and whatever He Authorizeth and Alloweth is Such, and can be no Other. This is near akin to what our Modern Monster of Philosophy, and especially of Politicks hath defended, viz. that the Law of the Magistrate is the Rule of Good and Evil, and that the Real Difference between True and False dependeth on the Princes Decrees and Edicts, and that the Sacred Scriptures are not Canonical till they are made so by Them. It amounts to this that Truth depends wholly on *Authority*, and particularly on that of the Ruler and Governor, What He saith is Truth, is so:

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and if he saith the contrary to Morrow that also is Truth. You see what a Vile Notion this is, and how it destroys the very nature and essence of Truth. We have no reason then to be led by the Authority of the Greatest Men on Earth. This can be no Safe Conduct to us; for do not we see, and may we not be assured that Honour and Wealth and High Places frequently pervert Mens Understandings, and bias their Judgments? and the poor and meanest Persons may sooner arrive to right and just Notions of things than the Other are like to do. Wherefore the *Great* are not the Judges of Truth. Nor do I intend by This that you are to make *Inferiour Persons* your Oracles, and to seek for Truth from the *Poor* and *Vulgar* as Infallible Masters; as if This took up its residence only with those that have no Lands and Demesns. No: They likewise may be Biassed and Corrupted, or they may be Afraid to Displease others by speaking what they think, and so you Consult them to little purpose. But This is certain that This Meaner Rank of Men, if they be Masters of a Sufficient Knowledge, are not so liable to Mistakes and Errors as the Other Degree of Men are. Now, because the Authority of these Persons is not so much Valued by Men generally as the Authority

ty of those of Higher Quality, I had Reason to Caution against them Chiefly and in the First place, by telling you that if you wish for the Purchase of *Truth*, you must not make the Greatest Princes and Potentates under Heaven the Absolute Dictators of it. Their Authority is Fallible, and hath Actually Deceived great Numbers of Men.

2. Think not that *Learned Men* are the Infallible Guides of your Faith, and Absolute Conductors to *Truth*. The want of Attending to this Rule hath been the cause of the Wildest and most Extravagant Errors which have pestered the Christian World. Men have had a Good Opinion of the Knowledge and Learning of their Masters, and then All that they have dictated to them hath been taken down greedily. *Aulus Ipn* was more Valid among the *Pythagoreans* than a Demonstration. Their Master said it, and then they Admitted it without any Dispute. They received All that he said as Absolutely True, and they counted it an Unpardonable Crime to boggle at it, as *Valerius Maximus* * observ'd of them. And so likewise there were Others who Swore themselves Scholars under such and such

* Quæ ab eo acceperant, in disputationem deducere Ne-
fas existimarunt. Lib. 8. c. 15.

a Master, and then they Held with him right or wrong. Hence was the Great Variety and Difference of Opinions among the Philosophers of old, and hence it was that *Truth* was so Rare a thing among them. For every Party chose their Particular Master in Philosophy, and what He said they Resolved to Stand to in defiance of the greatest Evidence to the contrary. And since that time, some Mens doating on the Dictates of Others hath done a great deal of hurt in Learning. Their Dogmatical and Magisterial way of proceeding hath quashed the most noble Enterprizes in Arts and Sciences; they have counted *Aristotle's* or some Other Philosophers *Axioms* as Authentick as *Acts of Parliament*, yea a kind of Treason (not to say Blasphemy) to speak against them.

But my Business is to shew you that this Stiff Depending on the *Authority of Learned Men*, even to the Exclusion of Truth, may be seen in Other Examples of a Higher Nature, and in Other sorts of Men, as namely in the *Jews*, at that time especially when the *Messias* the Great Saviour and Redeemer (who was Truth it self) appeared in the World. What made That People despise the Doctrine of the Gospel, what made them so averse to receive the Christian Laws but the High

Opinion which they had entertained of their Teachers? The *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the *Lawyers* and *Doctors* were the only Learned Heads, as they thought. And seeing They were against the Christian Religion, they concluded it to be a Falshood. That could not be True which their Doctors and Rabbins did not hold. Thus they were deluded by resolving their Faith into the *Authority* of those who were esteemed as *Learned Men* by them. They scorn'd to learn the Truth of Fishers and Publicans and Illiterate Mechanicks: they disdain'd to be taught by such sorry Masters, these were not Learned enough for them. And this hath been one cause of the Obstinacy of the *Jews* since that time, *viz.* they rely on the judgment and determination of their Doctors: for 'tis the Precept of a famous *Jewish* Rabbin, Thou shalt not depart from the Words of the Rabbies and Doctors, although they tell thee that thy right Hand is thy left, and thy left Hand is thy right. *R. Solomon* on *Dent. 17. 11.* And I will instance also in the *Gentiles* and *Heathens* when the Gospel was preach'd to them they voted it *Foolishness*, because it thwarted the Doctrine of their *Philosophers* and *Wise Men*. They would not learn of *Barbarians*, for so they stiled all Nations but themselves.

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These Men that were skill'd in Arts and Sciences could not be perswaded that *Truth* could be taught them by Men of no Ingenuous Education, as the Apostles generally were, and hereupon they rejected the Gospel, and resolved to hold fast their *Errors* because they were maintain'd and upheld by the Wisest Men among them. We may see this in the *Christian Church* likewise, and there find that it was This which shut out Truth, or would not suffer it to Enter, viz. that the Authority of Wise and Knowing Men was too Highly esteemed and revered. *Origin's* Name was made use of to foster Error and Falshood in the Church: yea, * One tells us that some Men were heard to say, They would rather Err with *Origen* than Think Aright with others. So Powerfully did the Name of that Learned Man work upon them. The Great Esteem which they had of his Parts and Profound Skill in Divinity was able to betray them into the embracing whatever Error he should offer to them. And besides This Worthy Person there were Other *Fathers* about that time and afterwards whose very *Names* made Profelytes to some Errors, But I spare them.

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* Vincent. Lirinens. de Hæres. c. 23.

Some here may Object that I disparage the Decisions and Determinations of the *Learned*: and they will ask, whose Judgments shall be confided in if theirs must not? I Answer, No Man's Judgment (as it is the Judgment of This or That Man) but only so far as 'tis grounded on Right Reason and the Word of God is to be confided in. I have proved before that the *Great* and *Mighty* are not on That Consideration the Better and Abler Judges of Truth: Now I add that *Learning* doth not in all points qualify a Person for the discovering and delivering of Truth. Indeed if all Learned Men, with their Skill and Knowledge, had Integrity likewise, then the Case would be otherwise (though even Then they could not be Consulted as Absolute Discoverers of Truth, as I shall shew you anon:) but Learning doth not exempt Men from humane Infirmities and Failings, from Passion and Prejudice, and the Study of Interest. The Learned are the best Judges if there be not something else in those Persons that hinders and corrupts their Judgments: but oftentimes there is. Men of Great Knowledge are Biassed as well as Other Men are. Or, they may be Timorous, and so be apt to betray the Truth. A Man of Moderate Knowledge, if he be indued with Courage, is capable of doing More for the Truth

Truth than the Person who is of Great Parts and Learning, and yet is of a Fearful and Cowardly Temper. Thus Old *Paphnutius*, who had been a Great Sufferer under the Persecution rais'd by *Diocletian*, and had lost one of his Eyes in that sharp Service for his Master *Christ Jesus*, and whose Body was Worn out almost with Age and Hardships, and whose Mind and Faculties were there-with also impaired, this Good Old Christian found not his Valour and Courage for the Truth abated, but stood up Manfully and Defended the Honest Marriage of the Clergy, even against the Suffrages of a Whole *Council* almost, in which *Every one* of them perhaps was far more Learned than this Decrepid Father: yet he brought them over to the Acknowledgment and Decision of that Truth which he had asserted. This is a Plain Instance to shew you how *Truth* may Miscarry sometimes among the Learnedest Heads, and how a Good Heart is the best friend and supporter of it. Which puts me in mind of an excellent passage in our *Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*. [Companies of Learned Men, saith he, though they be never so great and reverend, are to yield unto Reason, the weight whereof is no whit prejudiced by the Simplicity of the Person who doth alledge it; but

being found to be found, and good, the bare Opinion of Men to the contrary must of necessity stoop and give place.]

Again, as Truth miscarrieth by Reason of Timorousness and other Failings which Knowing Persons are subject to no less then Others, so let me offer this to you as a Reason why we come short of Truth, even when we follow the Dictates of those Writers of the Church who are esteemed most Learned, *viz.* because some of these who pass for Learned Men, and were really so, were not Learned and Instructed in *Some* things in Religion, and consequently if we follow their Judgments in *Those* things, we are in a direct way to Error. The Christian Religion was not Fully Studied and Known by all the First Fathers of the Church, though Men of Great Worth and Ability; whence it cometh to pass that their Propositions are many times Unsafe, their Assertions are Groundless, their Reasons are Infirm and Fanciful, they frequently mistake the Holy Scripture, and Corrupt some of the Main things in Christianity. Where they do so, (and the Reader ought to Mind That) they are not to be Attended to as Masters of Truth, although in other matters they approve themselves very Learned and Understanding Persons.

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Let me add that even now at This Day there are many Persons reputed *Learned* who are not indeed so. A Library, a vast number of Authors, and Reading Much make not a *Learned* Man (though it is true no Man can be Very *Learned* without Much Reading.) It happens oftentimes that Great Reading meets with Shallow Capacities; and then no Great Learning is to be expected. Or suppose that Capacity to be somewhat answerable to the Reading, yet This very Latter is in it self Instrumental to Error: for Men by Reading Much have before them a Great many *False* as well as *True* Notions, and thereby are more apt than those of *Lesser* Reading to imbrace Error and Falshood, especially when you consider that Men in this Corrupt State are far more inclinable to Error than Truth. I might add in farther Pursuance of This Point, that the Greatest Errors and Heresies have been set on foot by the most *Learned* Men in the Christian Church. How Famous for Learning were *Arius*, *Nestorius*, *Macedonius*, *Pelagius*, and several others who gave Rise to the most Pestilent Errors? Hence we learn that Truth is not to be Judged by Great Names, and that Errors of the Rankest Quality may have the Patronage and Authority of Persons who are Men of Great Wit and Parts,

Parts, and are Celebrated for their Knowledge and Learning, and Lastly, that he who acquiesceth in Mens *Authority* will certainly Err.

3. Make not *Good Men* the Absolute Guides of your Faith, for they may Err as well as the *Great* and *Learned*. And here by *Good Men* I understand not only such as are Really and Sincerely Good, but such as Seem to us to be so, and are Really Thought by us to be such, and whom it is impossible at present to discover to be otherwise. We must always suppose that there are Hypocrites and Dissemblers, that there is an Affected and Feigned Sanctity among some Men: and we must remember that such have a Design oftentimes to obtrude Falshood upon us. I observed to you before that many of the Old Hereticks were outwardly Pious and Religious, Men of Singular Lives and Exemplary Conversations: but their Great Sanctity Authorized their Errors, for when Men observ'd that they were very Religious and Holy, they easily believed and imbraced all that they Said. And so at This day several who do a great deal of harm by the Doctrines which they spread, are Outwardly very Virtuous and Strict in their Lives. There are great Multitudes that attend to them because they have among their Party the
Fame

Fame of not only Sage and Wise, but Religious and Good Men. They examin all other Mens Sayings and Opinions by what *These* hold, they embrace nothing without first propounding it to these Masters, as the King of *Calecut* eats no Meat till it be first offer'd to his Idol. But we must not be deluded by a Shew of Sanctity into Unfound and Dangerous Principles.

Or, say that the Persons are Really Good and Pious, yet notwithstanding this they may be very Weak and Shallow. Many Persons have Good Aims in Religion, their Hearts are very sincere, but their Heads are none of the ablest, they have not Judgment Sufficient to be Directors in Dubious Cases especially. Moreover, though they be Good Men, yet we must retain This Maxim, that a Religious Life cannot Authorize and Justify a False Perswasion. And This is to be remembred also that even Holy Men are sometimes Deceived themselves, and Deceive others, for *Holiness* doth not absolutely free them from Mistakes, though afterwards I shall prove that it is a Great Advancer of Truth and Right Apprehensions of things in Religion. The Apostles themselves Erred Grossly, and Mistook in the Highest Matters, They were not sensible of the Main thing which the

Gospel designed, namely a Spiritual Kingdom. That they dreamt of a Worldly and Politick Government is apparent from that Question which they put to our Saviour in Acts 1. 6. *Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?* Even after the Descent of the Holy Ghost they knew not that the *Gentiles* were to be Called, Acts 10. 28. Many of them were for Retaining the Old *Mosaick* Rites and Ceremonies. You read in the Epistle to the *Galatians* at what a strange rate that Church *Judaized*: yet no less a Man than St. *Peter* was one of the Authors of their Mistakes and Miscarriages; this Great Apostle set them the Example, Gal. 2. 11. Some think that *Pythagoras's* Opinion of *Transmigration* was held by the Apostles, as seems to appear from their Question concerning him that was Born Blind, *Who did Sin, this Man or his Parents, that he was Born Blind?* Joh. 9. 2. Which seems to imply that they thought he was in another Body before, and then Sinned, and for That was thrust into his Present Body. This Opinion it may be they had from their Countrymen the *Jews*, who (it is thought) were generally of This Perswasion. Accordingly we read that *Herod* and the *Pharisees* imagined *Christ* to be *John Baptist*, or *Elias*, or one of the *Prophets*, i. e. the

the Soul of one of these Christ's Body, *Mat. 14. 2. 16. 14.* But whether the Apostles had imbibed This Notion I will not determine: but the other Particulars are beyond all Dispute. It is certain that these Holy Men were in the Dark as to Those things. And if the Apostles, the Intimate Friends and Favourites of our Lord had False and Erroneous Perswasions for a time, then it is not to be wonder'd at that the Primitive Fathers and Doctors, even those who were of Eminent Piety and Integrity, held many False Opinions. I shall give you some Account of These afterwards: at present I will only offer to you a very Notable Passage of that Pious Father *St. Augustin*, which hath reference both to This Particular which I am now treating of, and to the Other before named. His Words are These, * " I so read Other
 " Writers that I do not presently conclude what they say, to be *True* because
 " They say it, be they of never so Great
 " *Sanctity* and *Learning*, but because
 " they are able to Prove what they say
 " to be True, and to Perswade me to
 " as-

* Alios autem (Scriptores) ita lego, ut quantalibet Sanctitate Doctrinâq; præpolleant, non ideo Verum putem quia ita ipsi senserint, sed quia mihi vel per illos Autores Canonicos, vel probabili Ratione quod à Vero non abhorreant, persuadere potuerint. Epist. ad Hierom.

“ assent to it, from the Books of Canonical *Scripture*, or from Good Probable Arguments fetch’d from *Reason*. Here you see This Excellent Person assigns the very same *Conveyances and Channels of Truth* which I laid down. *Scripture* and *Reason* are the only Standards and Measures of it. But as for the Authority of Men, though they be of the Greatest Piety and Knowledge, it must by no means be accounted a Just Measure of what we ought to believe for Truth (unless so far as it is serviceable to *Reason*, as I allowed before.) This was the sense of the Ancient Fathers and Writers of the Church, and thereby you may be convinced that This is no Novel Doctrine, and that the Authority of Men, although they be knowing and Godly, is no sure Basis to build our Faith upon. The Writings of the Best Men are not Inspired *Scripture*, nay sometimes they swerve from that Holy Rule. And therefore when the Popish Doctors and Priests oblige themselves by Oath to Interpret the Word of God according to the Exposition of the *Fathers*, they do unawares oblige themselves to Error, those Good Men having in many things deviated from the *Scriptures*. But this is the thing we must fix upon, viz. that in matters of Faith and Religious Worship the *Scriptures*

ture is our Rule (not abstracting wholly from the use of Rectified Reason,) and therefore those Good and Pious Writers, if they were now upon Earth, would not be angry and offended with us for dissenting from them in those things wherein they deviated from the Word of God, and consequently from Truth.

I might Instance also in Latter Times, and mention here the Doctrine of Consubstantiation, and other Collateral Opinions of the *Lutherans*. I must needs look upon *Martin Luther* as a *Man of God* (as the *Lutherans* themselves usually stile him,) and among his Followers there are Many Good and Holy Men, but they are not to be Masters of our Faith because they are so. You must not receive All their Doctrines because they are held by very Godly Persons. You must not suffer Any Man to lead your Understandings Captive, and to Command and Usurp upon your Consciences. *Truth* is not lodged in the Names of *Luther* or *Calvin*, though they were Worthy Servants of God. I am ascertain'd that Neither of them look'd upon themselves as Unerring Oracles. *Luther* and *Calvin* had not so much of the *Pope* in them as to think themselves Infallible: and I am sufficiently convinced that they would not have Others to think so of them. For my part therefore I will
never

never believe any thing to be True merely because One of These Persons, or any Other Godly Man said it. If I should act thus, I should Idolize Men, and I should Vilify at the same time the *Word of God* which is the Only Infalible Test of Truth. You see what I aim at; and if you Design and actually Prosecute the Same, I can not see how it is possible you should miss of Truth, or ever be corrupted with False Doctrines. Men of Worth and Knowledge are apt to value themselves upon those Qualities, and they take it ill if their Judgments be suspected. *Are we blind also?* say they with the *Pharisees*. Nothing angers them so much as a suspicion of Ignorance: they can't endure to have their Knowledge and Ability call'd in question. But question them you must when there is occasion, viz. when you would have farther warranty and security for their being in the Truth then the *Authority of Men*. Truth must not be taken on *Trust*: it is a matter of *Choice*. It is a Vile and Unworthy thing to make a Resignation of our Judgments to the dictates and determinations of *Others*. We take the ready course to embrace *Error and Falshood* when we venture to take all Doctrines on *Other Mens Words*. It is our Concern and Interest to try them ourselves, and not to stick to This or That

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Opinion because it is taken up by such Men (whether Great, or Good, or Learned) but because Right Reason and Scripture dictate This to be preferred to That. We must remember that we ought not to call a thing True or False because This or that Man saith so, but because our Rational Conception of it agrees or disagrees with the Thing it self. We must not believe for the sake of Humane Authority, although we are Led by it to believe: but we ought to assent to the Truth for it self, and for its Own sake.

St. Austin's Saying, *I should not have believed the Gospel unless I had been moved to it by the Authority of the Church*, may be Admitted without Prejudice to This which I here assert. For though Truth is to be Credited for it self, yet it may be Handed to us by the Church. Nor doth it follow thence (which some would Infer) that the Authority of the Church is Greater than that of the Scriptures. Philip brought Nathanael to Christ, 1 Joh. 46. Doth it therefore follow that Philip was Greater than Christ? Many of the Samaritans believed because of the Womans Words, Joh. 4. 39. In a resembling manner, the Testimony of the Church may, and doth bring us to believe Christ and the Scriptures: but then with the Samaritans we ought to say, ver. 42. *We believe not because*

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of thy Words, for we have heard him Our
 selves, and know it is so Indeed. We are
 acquainted with the Thing It self, we dis-
 cern the Truth by its Own Light and Lu-
 stre. And when Truth is Thus made
 known to Men, they assert and maintain
 it with Great Vigour and Confidence, and
 it is no easy matter for False Teachers and
 Impostors to wrest it from them. To
 conclude this Head, let not any Mans
 Name decoy us into Error. Credit no
 Doctrine because of the Person who de-
 fends it. This undoubtedly is *Having our*
Lord Jesus Christ with Respect of Persons.
 Though Men be Great, though they be
LEARNED, though they be **GOOD**, yet
 remember that they are but Men, they
 are obnoxious to Error, they are not free
 from Mistakes and Imperfections. But
 the Holy Word of God is Compleat and
 Perfect, the Sacred Scriptures are Abso-
 lute and Entire, and if we would firmly
 Resolve to adhere to Them, and Actual-
 ly do so, there would be forthwith an
 End of all Controversies and Disputes in
 Religion, and Error would Vanish and
 Disappear, and all the Necessary Verities
 of Christianity would become Plain and
 Obvious to us.

4th. Then, As I have excluded the
 Great, the Learned, the Good from being
 Absolute Dictators of Truth, so likewise
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there is no Reason that we should make the *Most* our Guides in the way that leadeth to it. Though that Law or Rule in *Exod. 23. 2.* be chiefly and principally a Direction for Judges in Publick Courts, yet it may well be made use of in our Private judging and determining concerning what is True. We are *not to follow a multitude*, we must *not decline after many to wrest judgment*: we are not to be bias'd by the *Rabbim* (for that is the Word used in both Clauses:) when we set our selves to make a true and just estimate of the Propositions that are before us, and to give our Opinion of them, we must carefully mind this Rule, not to follow the *Many*, not to decline after the *Multitude*. The contrary practise hath been the rise of great Errors and Mispri-
sons in the World, as we have found in the determinations of some Publick Assemblies, Synods and Councils, where the Cause hath been wholly carried by the greater number of Votes. And indeed, as the state of things in the World is, it cannot be otherwise in the Societies of Men, for if any thing be to be determined, the major part must claim a pre-
heminence before the lesser, or else there will be no decision of any case, and no ending of Controversies. And thence it is a known Maxim in the Imperial Law,

Refertur ad universos quod publicè sit per maiorem partem. When the decision is made by the majority, All are imployed, for the greater part is construed to be the whole. But this lays the foundation for many an Error, and greatly strengthneth and confirms it, for Men think themselves secure when they have the General Cry on their side: they reckon themselves safe because they travel in Company, and are attended with a whole Caravan. But it will be best for us to take other measures, for a *Multitude* is no *Argument*, and never was with a Wise Man. I will let you see it in some things of a Lesser Nature, that from thence you may guess what Judgment to make in Divinity. That the Opinion of the Most, or the Commonly Received Opinion may prove False, and frequently doth so, is to be discerned from such Instances as these, The Common Report and Belief is that *Moles* have no Eyesight, but to the Curious Searcher it appears Otherwise, i.e. that they have Holes through the skin of their Heads to see through, though indeed they are very small, which is Suitable enough to That Creature which lives in the Dark, and hath but Little occasion for Eyes. The Common Vogue is that *Doves* have no Gall, that *Elephants* have no Knees, that the *Viper* breaks through its Dam's belly

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that a *Basilisk* Poisoneth by his Eye, and by Priority of Vision, that if a *Wolf* seeth a Man first, he suddenly strikes him Dumb, that *Spanish Mares* are ingendered by the Wind, that all *Hares* are of both Sexes, All which are found to be Fabulous. So it is said a *Salamander* will live a long time in the Flames, whereas this only is true that that Cold Moist Creature, like Frogs and Snails, continues alive Some time, but not Long when it is cast into the Fire. So it is said that *Fishes* do not Breathe, the Contrary whereof is evidenced from This, that they Live in Water which admits the Air, but Die if shut up. It is said that the Floating of dead Bodies which were Drowned proceeds from the Breaking of the Gall, but the True Reason is the Putrefaction of those Bodies. So it is Commonly Vogued that Males are conceiv'd on the Right, and Females on the Left side of the Womb, whereas Ocular Experience proves the Situation to be Promiscuous. And a great many other Mistakes of the like Nature are current with the less judicious part of the World. Nothing hath gain'd a more Universal Consent than This, that the Heat in the latter end of *July* and in the greatest part of *August* (which we call the *Dog-Days*) proceeds from the *Dog-Star*, whereas that Star is not in Our Hemis-

phere, and so cannot Affect Us ; but at that Season it is just over the Heads of our *Antipodes*, so that those People should be Cold then because We are Hot. But the True and Only Cause of the Heat of that Season is the Perpendicular Rays of the Sun, and his Longer Stay on the Horizon, which lasts yet a good while after the Solstice. There are Other Opinions taken up by the Vulgar, as that there are *Griffins*, i. e. creatures that are partly Lyons and partly Eagles, that *Pelicans* feed their young ones with their Blood, that the *Beaver*, to escape the Hunter, bites off its Testicles, that *Badgers* legs are Shorter on one side than on the other, that *Garlick* hinders the Attraction of the *Loadstone*, that a *Lyon* will not hurt a Virgin, or any of the Royal Blood ; that this Animal is afraid of a *Cock* (therefore as a Defensive against the fury of this Beast, *Pliny* prescribes Cock-broth) that there is a *King of Bees*, whereas, if a Late* Observer of Bees is to be credited, their Monarchy is Female, and there is only a Queen that presides over them. Thus I thought good to let you see, even in these Meaner and Lower Instances of Popular Prejudice and Vulgar Mistake that the Common Report or Opinion of

* Mr. Butler.

the Many is not a just measure of Truth.

But I must now Advance, and shew you this in matters of an Other and Higher Nature. The Opinion of the *Most* did not constitute Truth, or (which is the same thing) Multitude was no Argument when God had his Church, *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*, in the *Land of Judea*, coop'd up in that narrow spot of Ground, which was incapable of holding many Persons, whilst the mean time all the rest of the Spacious World was the habitation of *Infidels*. And afterwards, when the *Christian and Evangelick Truth* shew'd it self in the World, upon the arrival of our Saviour and the preaching of the Apostles, it could not be discerned from the *Great Numbers* of its followers. After this, if General Consent and the Suffrage of the *Most* make Truth, then the *Arian Heresy* was Such: for it was the Complaint at that time that the Whole World run that way. *The World wondered it was become Arian*, saith St. Jerom. And, *Athanasius against the Whole World, and the Whole World against Him*, was usually said at That time. Gregory Nazianzen acquaints us how the *Arian Hereticks* in those days bragg'd of their Great Numbers, and objected to the Orthodox their Fewness; *they Defined the True Church*, (saith he)

he) * by the Multitudes that followed it, and they despised Christ's Flock because it was Little. Theodosius, when he entered on the Empire, found All Provinces Full of the Arian Heresy. Their Doctrine hath been Confirmed by no less than Eight Councils, which at several times were called at Tyre, Sardis, &c. It must be granted then that if Arianism was an Error, Number is no mark of Truth. Therefore Athanasius hath a little Treatise (among his Other Writings) on purpose against those † who Judge of Truth only by the Multitude which espouseth it. Divorcing of Women from their Husbands who were Priests had Pass'd in the First Council of Nice if Good Paphnutius (as you heard before) had not stood up, and declared against the Unlawfulness of it. One Single Paphnutius withstood the Whole Possess of the Synod. When the Stream of the Current ran so Violent, He would not be Borne down with it. It appears thence that THE MOST are not the Deciders of Truth, and that Truth is not to be Determined by Numbers. Again, if it were, Mahometism must be our Religion, for this is profess'd by the Greatest Kingdoms in the World. Besides the Arabians, Moors,

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* Οἱ πλῆθος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ὀρίζοντες, καὶ τὸ βραχὺ διαπίπτοντες ποιμένιοι. Orat. 25.

† Τὸ πλῆθος μόνον κρινόντας τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Tom. 2.

Saracens, and *Turks* (who are sufficiently numerous) the *Great Mogul* is of the *Mahometan Religion*, and so is the *King of Persia*, though not of the same individual Sect. These all equal the *Pagans* in number, so that if we will be determin'd by the Majority, we must all turn *Mahometans* or *Heathens*, for there are More *Mahometans* and *Heathens* in the World than *Christians*. That Opinion then is not to be imbraced which is back'd with the most Voices, but with the Strongest Reasons: and the very Reasons and Arguments which are brought for any Doctrine are to be Weighed, not Numbred. That is an Admirable Passage in *Seneca*,
 " Our Short Life (saith he) is worn out
 " among Errors, although we endeavour
 " to get us a Good Mind. There is no
 " thing therefore to be more shunned
 " than following the Multitude without
 " Examination, and believing any thing
 " without Judging. Let us enquire what
 " is Best done, not what is most Commonly
 " done and allow'd by the Generality,
 " which are the Worst Interpreters of
 " Truth. We may descry from this, and
 from what hath been suggested before
 what is the way to find out Truth, and to
 be real possessors of it. We must choose
 it

* Epist. ad Gallion.

it for It self, and not on the mere determinations of Others. We must not depend on the Authority of Men, especially we must not resolve to be of such an Opinion because tis cried up by the Most, because it is follow'd by whole Drowes, because it hath a Large Retinue and Gang after it. This is one great cause of that small improvement of Knowledge, or rather of that decay of it which is to be seen among Christians. They sit down Contented with the Sentiments which they observe have the General Vogue. Or if they are at a Stand, and know not well what Opinion or Doctrine to prefer, they presently go to the Poll, and think they must Choose Truth as they do Knights of the Shire by Plurality of Voices. For Multitude is a Strong Argument with them, and the Greater Number sways them. They are of the mind of the *Talmudists*, that *the Voice of Many is the Voice of God*. When they Contest with any Party, they are Satisfied if they can but say as *Elisha* to his Servant, *They that be with us are more than they that are with them*. And if we enquire into the reason of this, viz. how there comes to be this common Impression and Notion on Mens Minds that the Most are in the right, that the Greatest Numbers have the Truth on their side, I conceive this

account may be given of it, Mankind is of a sociable temper (whatever the Philo-
sophists say to the contrary,) there is a natural Inclination in Men to Compliance and Conformity with others: they generally hate the imputation of Singularity, and love not to go alone. Hence it comes to pass that sometimes they make an ill use of this innate genius and temper of theirs, and out of an inbred propension to Sociableness herd with the worst sort of Men, because they are the most Numerous, and greedily imbibe their Opinions and Perswasions though they be very pernicious. Hence it is that there is an Association in Error, hence Falshood seeks out for Allies and Confederates: and the Erroneous and De-
luded are seen to march by whole Caravans and entire Companies. Hence the fewer think they must resolve themselves into the Many, and be terminated in them, as all Rivers discharge themselves at last into the Ocean. The Sum is, Men commonly embrace Error because it is generally receiv'd, and they will abandon the Truth because it is espoused by a Few, and because it is destitute of Company. But if we would in Good Earnest betake our selves to a pursuit after Sacred and Divine Truth, we must take care that Numbers do not prevail with us: we must

must not choose such an Opinion because the Most hold it, because it is a Received Notion, for it is evident that Truth is evil spoken of and despised by the Greatest Numbers of Men, and she hath always been the Purchase and Possession but of a Few in comparison of those who delight in Error and Falshood.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

An other Voluntary Hindrance of Truth is Over-valuing of Antiquity. This not said to disparage the Antients. In several Instances of Christians, Pagans and Jews, 'tis shew'd that Antiquity hath been made a Plea for Error. Those of the Church of Rome more especially plead this. The Canons of the Apostles are not of that age as is pretended. The Spurious Antiquity of other Writings. All Professions generally lay claim to Antiquity. As Error may be Old; so Truth may be New. The Antient Writers of the Church but mean Hebritians. The latter Ages are more Knowing than the former, and why. This acknowledg'd by some of the Roman Communion. We are not to be surprized at the Novelty of any Discovery. St. Cyprians Decision concerning Antiquity.

6ly. **A**N Other Cause of Error and Hindrance of Truth is Mens Over-valuing of Antiquity, and Attributing too much to Former Times: a fond Doating on All that their Forefathers believ'd, with a Disliking of all that is said Since. I would not be thought either here or in the former Particular to Disparage Venerable

able Authority or Antiquity. I have Cleared my self as to the Former : and before I go any further, I will Explain my self as to this Latter. This then I declare, that we ought to pay a Due Reverence to Antiquity, because it is most Certain that that Faith which is the Antientest is the Best we can imbrace. That of *Tertullian* will hold good, * *That which was First is Truest*, and what he saith again, † *The Catholicks prescribe for their Doctrines from the Beginning. That is True and delivered by the Lord himself which is most Antient; but that is False which was brought in Afterwards.* Thus He against Hereticks. And after the same manner he speaks again, || *That may justly be look'd upon as Heretical Doctrine which was Late-ly introduced, and that may well pass for Truth which was deliver'd from the Beginning.* It is not to be doubted but that Truth is Older than Falshood. The Orthodox Doctrine had the Start of that which is Heretical : and they that were so Near the Fountain of Truth could not but have the Best Opportunity on some

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* *Primum quodq; verissimum est.*

† *Id est Dominicum & Verum quod sit Prius traditum : id autem Extraneum & Falsum quod sit Posterius immisum. Præscript. cap. 22.*

|| *Id tantum Hæresis deputabitur quod Postea inducitur, in quantum Veritas habebitur quod Retrò & à Primordio traditum est. lib. contra Marcionem.*

accounts of Searching into it, and being intimately Acquainted with it. With some Men, I know, the Antient Writers are Superannuated, and Modern and Upstart Authors are only Praized. But certainly we employ our Time well when we Consult the Fountains, and see what those First Instructors in the Church (next to the Apostles) have deliver'd to the World. It is the great Fault of the present Age that they converse not with the Old Writers, but every little Pamphlet of the Moderns is prefer'd to them. Which proceeds for the most part from a love of Novelty, and a dislike of Antiquity, as also from a lazy temper in too many of this Age, who will not be at the pains to search into the True Original of things, and to go to the Spring-head, but are content to learn the Knowledge of them at the second hand. Too many, like *Rehoboam*, follow the Advice and Dictates of the *Young Men*, they despise the Writings of the *Antients*, and the Decrees and Sanctions of the *Primitive Councils*. But I am far from Incouraging any young Stripplings to pluck those Grave Fathers by their Beards. Let them rather listen to what the Venerable Gray Hairs have dictated, and by the Writings which they have left let them be informed of the State of the Christian Church in those Days;

Days, and let them Love that Truth which is of so Antient a Date.

But then this may be adjoined that some *Errors* and *Falshoods* are *Old*, although *Truth* is the *Eldest*. And therefore we have reason to be Wary and Cautious lest we be Mistaken. The Church was Infected with Heresy even from the Times of the Apostles. This Mystery of Iniquity began then to work. With true Doctrines there grew up False ones continually. Ecclesiastical History will abundantly satisfy us about this Point: and it would be Endless to offer to you a Retail of the Particular Mistakes and Delusions of the very First Times. *Irenæus* relateth that the Presbyters of *Asia* told him from the Mouth of St. *John* and the rest of the Apostles, that Christ Preach'd the Gospel upon Earth near twenty Years, and lived almost fifty Years: and this Tradition gained the Assent of Many because it was so *Antient*. Which was the Chief foundation also of That Doctrine which prevail'd a Long time in the Church, that Christ should personally Reign on Earth a thousand Years, after the Resurrection. This was held by *Justin Martyr* (*Dialog. cum Tryph.*) *Irenæus* (*Adv. Hæres. l. 3. c. 32.*) *Tertullian* (*Lib. 3. adv. Marcion. De Resurr. carn. c. 25. Lib. de Spe fidelium*) *Lactantius* (*Instit. l. 7.*

c. 24.) *Sulpitius Severus*, as he is reckon'd among the *Chiliasm* by *St. Jerom* (in cap. 30. *Ezek.*) And they were led into this Error by the *Antiquity* of it, for it came down from *Papias*, who was *St. John's* Disciple, and Bishop of *Hierapolis*, as *Eusebius* (*Eccl. Hist.* l. 3. c. 33.) and *Jerom* (*de Scriptorib. Eccles.*) jointly attest. I mention these Particulars only (though I could name Many) to let you see how Error crept into the Christian Church Betimes, and False and Lying Traditions prevail'd very Early, and that the pretence of *Antiquity* was then very Pernicious. Error, to Deceive with a Better Grace, puts on a Grave and Antient Countenance, and Looks very Venerable. Some are apt to entertain any Falshood merely because it is Old. A Hoary Head controlleth their Belief, and the Name of a *Father* Aweth them like Children. In many Points they can plead nothing but Prescription: they think it is here as it is in the acquest of a Crown, Quiet Possession takes away all defects, and removes all doubts.

What was it that made both *Pagans* and *Jews* adhere to their False Notions, and reject the Truth but their Fond Esteem and Veneration which they had of *Antiquity*? They argued themselves into the Grosslest Errors by stiffly pleading this.

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The *Gentiles* would by no means quit That Religion and Worship which were of so Long a Standing in the World. What was *Antient* was thought *Divine*, * and was supposed to come from God. Wherefore as long as they could plead *Prescription* for their Idolatry and Superstition, they would not imbrace any Other Religion. *Socrates* therefore is a Rare Example in Pagan History, who freely and boldly Reprehended the Vain Opinions of Heathenism, and endeavoured to perswade the Vulgar out of a Belief of their False Gods. But we read what was the Consequence of This his Attempt, *viz.* that they put him to Death: and this Particular Reason of it was Assigned and Registred, that he inveigled the People to believe Other Gods than what the City of *Athens* Worshipt, and that he brought in *Innovations* in Religion. The Infalible Records relate to us how the *Jews* miscarried in This matter. Even This People had a Kindness for Idolatry because it was the Religion of some of their Forefathers in *Egypt*. Whereupon they were particularly forbid by God to go in the way of their Ancestors, *Walk ye not in the statutes of your Fathers, neither observe their Judgments, nor desile*

* *Antiquitas proximè accedit ad Deos. Cic. de Leg. l. 2.*

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your selves with their Idols. Thus God spoke to them in the Wilderness, as we read in *Ezek. 20. 18.* These People also a long time after refused to imbrace *Christianity* because it was a *New* thing: and they would not be perswaded to quit their *Mosaick* and *Legal* way of Worship because it was of so Great *Antiquity*, because there was an *Immemorial* Prescription for it. * *Thou art not So many years Old*, said they to our Saviour, thou art not yet come to any *Considerable Age*, the way that thou propoundest is but of yesterday: *art thou Greater than our Father Abraham*, † who lived so many Hundred years ago? Thus because *Abraham* was before Christ, and the Law before the Gospel, they stuck to the former, and obstinately opposed the latter. Antiquity with Them was an Absolute Argument of Truth. And it is probable This is one Great Reason why they reject the Gospel to This Day, *viz.* because they look upon it as an Innovation, and nothing is of so Antient Date as Their Law.

But there is an Other sort of Men (and who derive a Great part of their Religion from *Judaism* and *Paganism*) who are Shrewd Pretenders to *Antiquity*, and
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* John 8. 57.

† John 8. 53.

make This a Principal Mark and Character of their Church. They go back very far into the Old Testament to prove the Antiquity of a *Monastick Life*, and there they find that *Elias* and *Eliska* were the first Founders of that way of Living. Nay * *Bellarmino* derives it from *Enos*, and particular from that Text before named, *Gen. 4. 26.* as if *calling on the name of the Lord* were proper to *Monks*. The worshipping of *Reliques* is as antient, they say, as the Translation of *Joseph's Bones*, *Exod. 13. 19.* The making of the *Sign of the Cross* on the Forehead is † taken from the Old Testament, viz. from sprinkling the Lintel and Posts of the Doors with Blood, *Exod. 12. 22.* And the Antiquity of the *Priests Celibacy* he gathers from the *Priest's wearing of linen breeches*, *Exod. 28. 42.* To defend the Custom of some of their Friers going *Barefoot* they go back as far as *Moses*, and find that he was commanded to pull off his *Shoes*. That Command reaches Them, because of the Reason of it, for those Devout People make all Ground Holy which they tread upon. But to speak of those things which All Men of that Church do seriously plead *Antiquity* for

* De Monach. l. 2. c. 5.

† Bellarm. de S. Eucharist. l. 4. c. 29.

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for, They are their Doctrines concerning Purgatory, Worshipping of Images, Praying to Saints, Praying for the dead that are in Purgatory, the Offering up of Christ in the Mass; They are also their Traditions concerning the Many Rites and Ceremonies which they constantly use, and value their Religion so much upon: but I will not Trouble you with a Recital of them. They Commend all These their Doctrines and Ceremonies to the People with this Plea, that the *Antients* held and practis'd them all, the *Primitive Ages* of Christianity approved of every one of them; than which there can not be a more apparent Falshood.

To maintain some of these *Antient Ceremonies* (as they call them) they bring out *Old Canons*: thus they alledge the *Canons of the Apostles* (as they Entitle them;) and some of them assert that they were made by the *Apostles* themselves. But if so, they must have been put into the Canon of the *New Testament*, as Other Writings of the Apostles are. So *Turrianus* the Jesuite, who holds that they were made by the Apostles, holds likewise that they are Canonical Scripture, (which is something Above what *Damascen* * saith of them, viz. that they are of the Same

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* Lib. i. c. 18. de Orthod. fide.

Authority with the Holy Scriptures of the Apostles.) But if that be True, our *Bibles* are Imperfect, and do not contain All the Inspired Writings. Others of them affirm that though they were not the Apostles own Writings, yet they were writ presently after their Time (yea whilst some of them were Alive) by *Clement* Successor to St. *Peter*. And they being of such *Antiquity*, we ought to have a very Great Reverence for them. But we may be Perswaded, or Convinced rather that they are not of that Early Date if we Consider first, that they are not so much as Mentioned by *Irenæus*, *Justin Martyr*, *Clement of Alexandria*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Jerom*, *Athanasius*, *Augustin*, or any of the Antient Fathers, no not by *Gelasius*. This alone is a sufficient Proof that they were not Extant in those Days, for These Writers must needs have cited them, having so often Occasion to do it. Again, many of the *Canons* are repugnant to the Doctrine and Practise of that Time, in which they are pretended to be made. It is pretty hard to prove that there were any *Metropolitans* and *Primates* in the Apostles Days; and no Bishops then obtain'd any favour or furtherance by the Secular Princes, which is there signified. Moreover, many Learned Men have observed that the Idiom of the Language

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at that Time suits not with these Writings, which sheweth that they were written Afterwards. * Others, being convinced by such Arguments as these, think they are not of so great Antiquity: but yet they tell us they were made before the *Nicene Council*. Which is no more to be credited than the former Opinion, for if this were true, we should meet with these Canons in *Synods* before that of *Nice*. Lastly, those that Receive these Canons agree not in their Number. Pope *Zepherine* counts them Sixty: the Fathers in *Trulla* Eighty five, and *Leo* the Ninth, long after, but Fifty. This doth somewhat impair the Credit of them. As for the true Age of them, it is Difficult to determine it; It is likely they were Compiled in the Fifth Century, by some, that had a mind to Impose on the World, saith *Daille*: or, (to speak more favourably) they might be the Canons of Synods and Councils in that Century, put together in this Form. But this is Unquestionable that their *Antiquity* is Counterfeit, and for the foresaid Reasons these Constitutions cannot be so Old as is pretended.

I insert This to Caution you against *Spurious Antiquity*, and to remind you that

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* *Albaspinzus*, *Du Pin*, *Beverege*.

All is not so Ancient as that Church would make us believe. I could let you see This in Other Writings, and yet keep my self within the First Century. In that compass of time there were Few Writers ; *Ignatius* was the only Person of Note. Therefore the Papists have supplied that Century with other Writers who are Supposititious, as the *Constitutions of the Apostles*, in Eight Books, compiled and digested (they say) by *Clement Bishop of Rome* : Five Books, *Ἀναγνώσεων*, or the *Recognitions* of the said *Clement*, which contain the History of *St. Peter*, &c. The same *Clement's Epistles*, two to *St. James* the Brother of our Lord, the other three to his Scholars : The *Epistles of St. Paul* to the *Laodiceans* : The *Passion of St. Peter and St. Paul* : The *Acts of St. Paul and Thecla* : The *Passion of St. Andrew* : The *Gospel of St. Thomas, Bartholomew, Barnabas, and other Apostles*. The *Gospel according to the Egyptians* : The *Gospel of Nicodemus* : The *Liturgies of St. James, St. Peter, St. Matthew, St. Mark*, in the first and last of which *Ὁμολογία* and *Ἐπιστάσιον* are found, which all Learned Men acknowledge to be of a Later Date : and particularly if that Epithet *Ὁμολογία* had been extant in those *Liturgies* of the Apostles in the time of the Council of Nice, it would have ended the Controversy.

Whence

Whence it is to be gather'd that there was no such thing then. Here I might add *Dionysius the Areopagite his Book of the Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, which came not out till about A. D. 360. as Bishop Pearson and Dr. Cave compute the time, or, as Daille and Du Pin conjecture, not till the beginning of the Sixth Century. Other Authors are said to be *Old*, who were not, as Prochorus (one of the seven Deacons) *his Treatise of the Life of St. John*, and Abdias the Babylonian concerning the Contention of the Apostles. And lastly, the *Decretal Epistles* said to be written by the First Bishops of Rome, Clement, Anacletus, &c. yea, all of them that are pretended to be before Syricius, are false and adulterate, even according to the confession of some of the Learnedest Papists. That those of the third Century (said to be written by Calixtus, Xystus, &c.) are spurious may be gather'd from the *Latin*, which is too bad and barbarous for that time; and besides, Eusebius, Damasus, Jerom make no mention of them, and yet they take notice of things of this nature, and less. It is probable also that the *Epistles* attributed to the *Roman Bishops* of the fourth Century are false and counterfeit, for they are not written in the stile of that Age, nor do Eusebius, and the other forenamed Writers mention any

of

of them. Though I deny not that the consulting and reading of these several Writings that I have enumerated may on *some* accounts be of good use, yet none of them (it is probable) were written by the Persons whose Names they bear, neither were they writ so Long ago as is pretended. But they are given out to be of that *Great Antiquity*, that the Contents of them (which in most of them are serviceable one way or other to the Church of *Rome*) may be received and imbraced with the greater Willingness and Eagerness. For there are Great store of Men in the World who Doat on *Antiquity*, and make it an Absolute Test of *Truth*. What St. *Jerom* saith of *Vice* * may be said of *Error*, it is entertain'd because it is Old, and because Men are *Used* to it, notwithstanding they acknowledge it to be an Error. What so *Long Prescription* hath allow'd they will not part with, and, in Plain terms, they will prefer *Antiquity* before *Truth*. This we see in a notable Instance, when St. *Jerom* made a New *Latin Version* of the Old Testament, which was exactly according to the Original, he rais'd a Storm about his Ears, he was not only reviled by *Ruffinus*, but by all Men

* Tanta est Vetusitatis consuetudo ut etiam confessa peccatisq; vitia placeant. Præfat. in lib. Job.

Men generally, Clergy and Laity, because they had been used before to an other *Translation* which had been a great while in the Church. Thus the Bible it self was not endured by them, the Sacred Primitive Truth was disliked for a time: and because he corrected the Mistakes of the *Old Translation* he was censured as an Innovator.

Indeed I find that there is an Inclination in *All Persons* generally to lay Claim to *Antiquity*, and to Please themselves that their Way or Profession is very Old. They gain Authority and Credit, they think, by Pleading this. Thus the *Chymists* in their Writings magnify their Art, and commend it to the World at a high rate by propounding the *Antiquity* of it. They tell us it was derived from *Tubal-Cain*, who was expert in Brass and Iron, and other Metals. The Professors of the *Philosophers Stone* brag of Books written by *Solomon*, by *Moses*, by *Adam* concerning that Art, yea they pretend Writings before *Adam*, and even antienter than the World. Some of the Fraternity of the *Rosy Cross* tell us that *Ezekiel*, others of them that *Elias* or *Elisha*, and others that *Moses* was the first Founder of that Order, for he (they say) was the first Inventaer of Mineral Medicines, and taught them to the *Israelites* in the Valley of *Sinai*,

Sinai, when he took the *Golden Calf* and *Calcined* it in the Fire, and ground it to Powder, and Incorporated it with a Solar Vehicle, and made the Children of *Israel* drink *Aurum Potabile*. I only give you this as an Instance of the Extraordinary Pretence which is made to Antiquity, whereby Men labour to conciliate a Veneration to their Opinions and Studies.

If there be not so High and Extravagant Pretence in *Religion*, it is not because some Men Would not be ready to make it, but because they Cannot, and the Matter will not bear it. But this is it which I offer to your Serious Consideration, that *Religion*, especially the *Christian* needs no Wily Stratagems of *Gibeonites*. My meaning is, it stands not in need of Feigned and Counterfeit Antiquity. And as for a False and Erroneous Religion, and all the Doctrines contained in it, they will not any ways be Advantaged by Mens pleading that they are *Antient*. To this purpose let me recommend unto you those Remarkable Words of *Tertullian*, “ * There is no Prescription against Truth.

* Veritati nemo præscribere potest, non spatium temporum, non patrocinia personarum, non privilegium regionum. Dominus noster Christus Veritatem se, non Consuetudinem cognominavit. Hæreses non tam Novitas quam Veritas revincit. Quòdcunq; adversus veritatem sapit, hoc erit Hæresis, etiamli Vetus Consuetudo. De Veland. Virgin. cap. 1.

" Truth. Length of Time, or Authori-
 " ty of Persons, or Priviledge of Places
 " are not to be Plead'd here. Our Lord
 " Christ call'd himself Truth, not Custom.
 " Heresies are to be confuted not so much
 " by shewing that they are New and Up-
 " start, as by demonstrating plainly that
 " they run counter to *Truth*. Whatever
 " Doctrine or Practise fights against *This*
 " is, and must be call'd *Erroneous* and
 " *Heretical* although it hath *CUSTOM*
 " and *LONG USAGE* to plead for it
 " self. *This* was the Sense of that Anti-
 " ent Father, he who before spoke so much
 " for *Antiquity*. So that you may plainly
 " see, *This Plea and Argument* may be fair-
 " ly made use of for the defence and main-
 " tenance of *Truth*; and yet withall it is
 " frequently us'd for the upholding and
 " vouching of *Error*. I desire therefore that
 " you would Consider this matter seriously,
 " and let this Topick of *Antiquity* be ma-
 " naged in its *Due and Right manner*. At-
 " tend not to *Feign'd Antiquity*. The *Gi-
 " beonites* pretended they came from a very
 " *Far Country*, when as they dwelt hard by.
 " Or, say that it is *Real Antiquity*; the *Old*
 " *Serpent* can plead the *same*. *Antiquity in*
 " *it self* is not Venerable. Who will *Court*
 " an *Error* for its *Years* and *Gray Hairs*?
 " Or, let me expresse it thus, To prize an
 " Opinion or Doctrine merely because it is
 " An-

Antient, is as if a Man should value his *Armour*, not because it is Good and Serviceable, but because it is *Rusty*.

And then on the Other side, it is fond to think that every Opinion which is *New* is *False*, and that all Doctrines which we never Heard of before are Unsound and Erroneous. This may be reckoned among the Sentiments of those Conceited Heads who believe that the Turning of Rivers from their Usual Channel is never Prosperous, and that Cutting out New Channels, upon the Altering the Old Course of Waters, is always Ominous. I should heartily declare I confess, against all Vain and Fond Projecting in Religion, it tending certainly to the Overthrow of it; but yet I am fully persuaded that Religion, even the Christian Religion, admitteth of some New Discoveries. I will not conceal my Opinion, *viz.* that the Divines and Other Writers of these two last Centuries have done more towards the *Stating* and *Clearing* of the Doctrines contained in Holy Scripture, and towards the *Methodizing* of them, and in a Rational, Free and Manly way setting them before us, and letting us See them to be *Truths*; these Moderns, I say, have done more towards This than all the Fathers and Writers who lived fourteen hundred Years before.

And

And though I thus think, yet I love and admire, I respect and honour the Writings of all the Learned and Pious *Fathers*, and I doubt not but the Perusing of them is serviceable, yea necessary in many Points both for the *Discovering* and *Establishing* of the *Truth*. They did well and laudably for their Time, but I never thought that they had the Monopoly of *Truth*; yea, I verily believe and can easily prove it (and will afterwards) that they Erred in Several particulars. Nor could it be otherwise, seeing many them retain'd some of the Corrupt Principles of the Philosophy which they were bred up in, seeing several of them were but Newly Admitted into the Christian Profession when they published their Writings, and seeing the most of them were very Unskilful in the *Tongues*, and understood not the Old Testament in the Original. You may guess they were Sorry *Hebritians* when not only * *Chrysostom*, but *Irenaeus*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, and others thought the word *Pascha* (which is of Hebrew Extraction, and signifieth *Passing over*) was derived from the Greek πάσχειν to Suffer: when *Justin Martyr* derives *Israel* from *Isra* a Man and

* Πάχα λέγειται ὅτι τότε ἔπαθεν ὁ Χριστός. Hom. 4. in 1. ad Tim.

and *El* power, and (a) *St. Chrysostom*, and (b) *St. Ambrose* tell us that the *Hebrews* had their name from *Abraham*. That Many of the Fathers had little skill in *Hebrew*, (c) *Theodoret's* Etymology of *Adam*, and not only (d) his but (e) *Eusebius's* Interpretation of *Abel*, and the derivation of *Bethany* according to (f) *Chrysostom* and *Theophylact*, and of the name *Jesus* according to (g) *Clement* of *Alexandria*, (h) *Eusebius*, and (i) *Cyril* of *Jerusalem* sufficiently testify. In many places of Scripture the Fathers are mistaken, and have very false Glosses on the Words merely because they follow'd the *Seventy Interpreters* (who often vary from the *Hebrew*) and could not consult the Fountains, being not skill'd in the *Hebrew* Tongue. Indeed only two of the Fathers understood this Language, *Origen* and *Jerom*. *St. Augustin's* skill in the *Greek* was as little as the rest of the Fathers in the *Hebrew*, as appears by his Etymology of *δίαβολος*, which he thought was from *δύς* and *βολος*.

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- (a) *Hom. 9. tom. 5.*
 (b) *In Epist. ad Philip. cap. 3.*
 (c) *Quæst. 25. in Gen.*
 (d) *Quæst. 60. in Gen.*
 (e) *Præp. Evang. l. 11.*
 (f) *In Matth. 21.*
 (g) *Prædag. l. 3. cap. 12.*
 (h) *Demonst. Evang. l. 14.*
 (i) *Cateches. Illum. 10.*

The First Christians certainly were not the most Knowing Men: they had more Heat than Light. And there is Good Reason to believe that *Truth* is more surely purchas'd by *Later Times*. Christianity grows not worse (as some Imagine) by its Farther Distance from the Fountain of it. Its Removal from its First Head and Source is no cause of its Decay, but may rather conduce to its Increase. *Crescit eundo*, the Further it moves, the more Strength and Force it gets. The Holy Scriptures (the Sum of our Religion) are more Clearly Understood now than they were in the Primitive Times: and there is good reason for it, for We have all the Helps that they had, and More: we read their Comments and Expositions, and a Great number of Others are since added to them. From a more Diligent Searching, Examining and Comparing of Holy Writ, which have been since that Time, there must needs arise a Clearer Light and Knowledge, Doubts must be discuss'd, Difficulties must be unlock'd, and the Will of God in that Divine Book more fully manifested. And this Age is doing its part, wherein divers Persons of exalted Spirits, of free and noble thoughts are stirr'd up by Providence to enquire into the profoundest matters of Divinity, into the greatest Ab-

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struties of Scripture, into the depth of Sense and Myſtery contain'd in them; ſo that Theology will have vaſt acceſſions in this Age. Beſides, the Knowledge of the *Tongues* wherein the Scriptures were writ (which are Great Helps to the unfolding the True meaning of the Penmen) is now more Common than of Old. Which things I find taken notice of by a very Judicious Writer: *The moſt partial for Antiquity, ſaith he, can't but ſee and confeſs thus much, that for the literal Senſe the Interpreters of our own times, becauſe of their ſkill in the Original Languages, their care of preſſing the circumſtances and coherence of the Text, of comparing like places of Scripture with like, have generally ſurpaſs'd the beſt of the Antients.* Mr. Hales of Eaton. Sermon on 2 Pet. 3. 16. On Theſe and many other Accounts which might be mentioned it is not to be queſtioned that theſe *Latter Ages* have the Advantage of thoſe *First Times*, and conſequently that *Antiquity* is a Topick not to be inſiſted upon here.

Theſe things are ſo Plain and Undeniable that ſeveral even of the Popiſh Perſwaſion have frankly acknowledg'd the Truth of them. " It is not neceſſary (ſaith " a Great School-Man * among them) " that

* Dominic. Bannes. 2a. 2a. pag. 58.

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“ that by how much the more the Church
 “ is removed from the Apostles times, so
 “ much the less perfect should be the
 “ Knowledge of the Mysteries of Faith
 “ therein, because after the Apostles
 “ times there were not the Most Learned
 “ Men in the Church, who had dexteri-
 “ ty in understanding and expounding
 “ matters of Faith. So *Pererius* the Je-
 suite in his Comment on those Words in
Gen. 6. 4. The Sons of God went into the
Daughters of Men, speaking how it was
 the Opinion of the Antient Writers that
 by the *Sons of God* are meant the *Angels*,
 he thence takes occasion to Reflect on the
 Mistakes and Errors of the Primitive
 Writers, and hath these Notable Words,
 “ Hence it may appear how much the
 “ Church of Christ from that time to
 “ this hath Profited in the Knowledge of
 “ the Scriptures and Divine Mysteries :
 “ for many Points which were of Old
 “ Obscure and Doubtful, or altogether
 “ Unknown to the most Learned are now
 “ Plain, Undoubted, and Clearly per-
 “ ceived even by those that are of Mean
 “ Learning. And an Other of the Ro-
 man Church thus, * *Our Ordinary Women*
now do better understand the Deepest My-
steries, which are Worthy and Necessary to

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* Lud. Viv. De Verit. fid. Christianæ. l. 5. c. 4.

be known, than the Greatest Philosophers did then. Let us therefore thank God that We have Greater Discoveries of Truth than those of Former Ages, that the Mistakes of those Times have been laid Open, and especially that Error hath been vanquish'd by the Pens of those Worthy Servants of God whom he hath raised up since the *Reformation*. It is granted that True Religion is ever the Same, and is as Old as the Author. The Eternal Laws of Good and Evil do never alter: but if we speak of the *Particular Schemes and Models* of Religion (according to the *Different Dispensations* of God in his Church) there is some Change and Alteration, and many things may be said to be New, and indeed are so, and there are *Fresh Discoveries* made in different Ages. God inables certain Persons to Explain and Unfold those Doctrines which heretofore were Dark and Unintelligible, to baffle those Corrupt Tenents which the Ignorance of foregoing Ages had brought in, and to represent the Great Principles of Faith to the World as they were at first set forth by the Evangelists and Apostles in Holy Scripture. *This* hath been the Blessed Work since the *Reformation*; and though some Perverse Spirits have Hindred it in a great measure, yet it hath gone on with no small Success,

Success, and I doubt not but the Ages to come (if they Sin not most Grossly against the Light, and thereby Extinguish it) will see the Farther Progress of it; and it will appear that the Antient and Primitive Times did not Ingross all knowledge of Truth, but that Something (and that of no Mean Nature) is reserved for Future Ages.

And therefore when we meet with any Worthy Discovery, *i. e.* when any Mysterious Point of Doctrine is clear'd out of Scripture, when some Difficult Texts are laid Open, or when some Prophecies and Predictions are evidently proved to be Fulfilled, let us Imbrace them as *Truth*, and not (as some are wont to do) Boggle at them because they are New. We have the Good Leave even of a *Roman Cardinal* for This, who Thus speaketh, “* Let
“ no Man think it Strange if sometimes
“ we bring a New Sense of Holy Scripture
“ different from the Antient Doctors, but
“ let him diligently Examine the Text
“ and Context, and if he find it to agree
“ therewith, let him praise God who hath
“ not Tyed the Exposition of the Holy
“ Writ to the Senses given by the Anti-
“ ent Doctors. So an Other Eminent
Man † of the *Roman* Communion acknow-

O 3. ledgeth

* Cajetan. in 1. Gen.

† Melchior Canus. Loc. Commun. l. 7. c. 3.

ledgeth that we ought not to reject a New Interpretation of any place of Scripture because it is Opposite to the Sense of the Antient Writers and Fathers; and he confesses that Truth is not Limited to the Old Expositions. It is also the Acknowledgment of an Other Noted Divine * among them, that the Divines of Later Days are more Quick-sighted than those of Former Times. If it be Thus, then *Truth* is not to be decided by *Antiquity*, and in our Enquiry after Truth we are not to reckon this as a Convincing Argument. We are to do as *Joseph's* Steward when he made Search for his Masters Cup, who † *began at the Eldest, and left at the Youngest*. We must not be Partial, but Examine both *Antient* and *Latter Times*; it may be we may find *Truth*, as He did the Cup, in the Custody of the *Youngest*. And when we do so, let it not Prejudice us that we found it There, but let us Esteem it as highly as if it came from the *Eldest*.

I know indeed that *Novelty* makes Men Startle, they Look Strangely on that which is New, they cannot Brook what they have not been Acquainted with. How Amazed were *Lactantius*, and St. *Augustin*

* Salmeron in Epist. ad Rom. c. 5. Disput. 51.

† Gen 44. 12.

Augustin at the Notion of *Antipodes*? And they might well be so when *Lucretius*, a Profess'd Philosopher, could not digest it. How Improbable and even Ridiculous did it seem to them that People should Walk with their Heads downward and their Feet upward (for so they represented the thing to their Fancies?) Seeing there was nothing to fasten their Feet to the Globe of the Earth, how could it be otherwise but that they should fall into the Clouds? How strange and uncouth a relation was it at first that the *Torrid Zone*, which was thought to be Inhabitable, is as Temperate and Pleasant a place of dwelling as any whatsoever? How Astonished were the Men who were addicted to *Aristotle's* Philosophy, when they heard that the *SOLID ORBS* were tumbling down, and that the Heavens were Fluid and Passable, and that a Man might get through them without Asking the Leave of an *Intelligence*? (for the Old *Aristotelians* held that every distinct Orb was Guarded, as well as Guided, by one of These.) As it was in These Points of Philosophy, so it will be in Those of Divinity. Men will be much Amazed and Surprized to see their Old Notions and Doctrines laid aside, and New ones taken up in their stead, and they will be very Angry and out of Hu-

mour on this account. But Generous and Manly Souls will not be guilty of such behaviour: they will not Explode Truth because they were not Acquainted with it before: but they will count themselves Happy that they have attained to the Knowledge of it at Last. All Men of Impartial Reason are willing and ready to receive *Truth* though it brings not with it Credential Letters from *Antiquity*. They will not be loth to leave their Old Sentiments when they perceive them to be False: they will not be so sottish as to doat upon Error because it is Stale. The Learned *Jewish* Doctors deliver us This among those *Proverbial* Sayings which are founded on Practice among them, *When Judgment is to pass in Courts in very Considerate Causes, The Junior Judges ought to give their Opinion and Suffrage first*: (and the Like is done in some Courts among Us) and they give This Reason for it, that they may more Freely give their Judgment, and not be Awed by the Opinion of their *Seniors*: for this they think would be the way to Exclude *Truth* out of the Courts of Judicature. Most certain it is that the Like thing would shut it out of most Societies, *i. e.* if *Age* and *Seniority* were to be the Standards of what is True, and if we were to receive nothing for such but what was
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voted to be so by Those that went Before us. What the Admirable *Seneca* saith of Practise, may as rightly be applied to Notions, * We should be careful of nothing more than This, that we do not in every thing Tamely Follow our Leaders (as Cattle go along with the rest of the Heard,) by that means going not whither we Should go, but whither we See Others go. For shame let us not be such Brutes, let us not (as we desire to find out *Truth*) be Captivated by Received Opinions, and give up our selves blindly to the Judgments of our Ancestours. If we do so, the *Reformation* is lost, and we must return to *Popery*, for that was the Religion of our Forefathers.

To Close up this Head of my Discourse I will present you with the Excellent Words of St. *Cyprian*, that Eminent Father of the Church, and that Great Sufferer for the Truth. He will in short give you a True Account of this Matter which I have been treating of: he will acquaint you in few words how *Truth* is to be adjudged by *Antiquity*, and how Not. Thus he speaks in one of his Epistles,

* Nihil magis præstandum est quam ne pecorum ritu sequamur antecedentium gregem, pergentes non quo eundem est, sed quo itur.

stles, “ * It is a very Easy thing for Men
 “ of Pious and Upright Minds to find
 “ out the Truth, and to discard all Er-
 “ ror in Religion : for there is but This
 “ One thing to be done, they must be
 “ sure to go back to the very Fountain-
 “ head and first Source of Divine Tradi-
 “ tion, and there they shall certainly
 “ meet the Truth, and all Errors of
 “ Mens Invention will vanish away. And
 afterwards to the same purpose, “ † If
 “ any Man wavers and doubts, and is at
 “ an Uncertainty concerning the Truth
 “ of any Doctrines in the Christian Re-
 “ ligion, let him repair to the Original
 “ and Fountain of Christian Truth, viz.
 “ what was deliver’d by our Lord in the
 “ Gospel, and by his Apostles both there
 “ and in the Acts and Epistles. This is
 an Excellent Rule, and if Men would At-
 tend to it, and Follow it, they could not
 possibly miss of Truth. Thus far this
 Pious Man acquainteth us how *ANTI-*
QUITY is a Guide to Truth. But then
 in the same Epistle he lets us know how
 it is made use of also for the Vouching
 and Defending of *Error* ; and therefore
 we ought to be Cautious in this Affair,
 which

* Epist. ad Pompeium.

† Si in aliquo nutaverit & vacillaverit Veritas, ad Ori-
 ginem Dominicam & Evangelicam, & Apostolicam Tra-
 ditionem revertamur, &c.

which is the thing I designed under This Head. Thus he expresseth himself, “*Antiquity and Custom must not hinder Truth from Prevailing and having the Victory : for (to speak Plainly) Custom without Truth is no other than the Oldness of Error, or Inveterate Falshood. And *much more* of the same Argument (which I will not transcribe) that Epistle affords, the substance of which is, that no Prescription of time can prejudice Truth, no more than it can the King. If Error should plead its Long Standing and Great Seniority, we are not to reckon such a Plea as Valid, but must remember that it is the Devil’s Policy to † Set off Error sometimes with the Gloss of Antiquity. But this we may fully satisfy our selves with, that the Writings of the Evangelists and Apostles are the Only Antiquity we can firmly Confide in, and Safely Appeal to, in all our Enquiries after Truth as it relates to the *Christian Religion*. Let That abide in us which we have heard from the Beginning, as St. John Exhorteth, Epist. i. chap. 2. vers. 24. If we observe This Apostolical Canon, it will

* Nec Consuetudo, quæ apud quosdam obrepserat, impedire debet quo minus Veritas prævaleat & vincat. Nam Consuetudo sine Veritate Vetustas erroris est.

† Hic est mos Diabolicus, ut per Antiquitatis traducem Commendetur Fallacia. Augustin,

will most successfully conduct us to Truth. Christianity is really Antient, it is *that which was from the Beginning*, 1 Jo. 1. 1. All the Great and Essential things of our Religion were discovered *at First*, and we must look for them in the Scriptures of Truth. But although the Necessary and Fundamental Doctrines of Christianity bear so Antient a Date, and have the same Horoscope with the Incarnate God, yet it is not to be doubted that the Illustrating and Explaining, the Adjusting and Reconciling of some of those Great Mysteries, as also the clearing them from those Corruptions which have a long time adhered to them, is the Task of those Ages which Succeeded. This is the Sum of all that I have said. And as there hath been Much done towards This Work Already, so I question not but there is More to be effected through the Blessing of God on Mens Studies, and it is not improbable in This very Age.

CHAP. VII.

The Writings of the Fathers are of very great Use and Excellency. That they were not exempted from Errors and Mistakes is shew'd in Instances produced out of the Writings of those of the Greek Church, viz. Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius. Out of the Writings of the Latin Fathers, viz. Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Hilary, Jerom, Augustin. There are some Errors that are common to Most of the Fathers. Of which Particular Instances are given. Some of the Antient Fathers of the Church favour'd those Rites and Ceremonies which were Preparatory to Popery. Some would justify the Fathers in this, but are not able to do it. The Fathers freely censured and found fault with one another. St. Augustin ingenuously acknowledg'd his own Errors, as well as took notice of those of other Writers of the Church. And since that time several of the Roman Communion (no less than the Reformed) have with freedom pass'd censure on the Fathers Writings. Which may be an Apology for the Author.

I Have shew'd that *Authority* and *Antiquity* are oftentimes made the foundation

tion of *Error*. To give yet a Further and more Particular Proof of this, I will Examine the Writings of those Worthy Persons call'd the *Fathers of the Church*, and thence I will make it evident that they were Mistaken in Many things. From which it will follow of it self, and I need not be Sollicitous to make it out, that Mens Relying on these Persons who were of such *Authority* and *Antiquity*, hath been the Cause of some particular Errors and False Doctrines in the Church. That the *Antient Fathers* did Err in fundry things, is that which I am to prove: But before I do so, I must Premise this that I intend not by this Discourse or any thing in it to Vilify those Worthy and Venerable Persons. Though they may Err, yet I mention it not to cast Reproach upon them: for this only evidenceth that they were *Men*, i. e. Fallible. But giving Allowance (as we ought to do) for their Errors, they were most *Admirable Persons*, and their Writings have done Excellent Service in the Church of Christ. From them we are Acquainted with the True State of Christianity in those days, they give us an account of the most Remarkable Transactions of the first Times, and let us know how things stood at the beginning. We may learn there what was the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church in those

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those early Days, what Heresies and Schisms arose, who were the Persons that maintain'd them, by what Arguments they upheld them, and how they were confuted, how the Orthodox Doctors of the Church interpreted the Holy Scriptures, and what manner of Reasonings they used to defend their Faith and Religion against those that brought in false Doctrine; what Eminent Men were rais'd up in the Church to assert the Truth, and how God preserved and prosper'd his Church in those first and early Ages of it. And certainly these Excellent Writers may Command our Assent in the *Matters of Fact* they relate, of which they were Competent Witnesses. Therefore *Luther* said well in his *Table-Discourse*, Although the Fathers deliver some things Erroneous, yet they are to be Esteemed and Reverenced because they Bear Witness to the Faith, and the Great things of our Religion. So that we may satisfy ourselves by Conferring with them that the Faith which we hold at this Day is the Same which was held and maintain'd by the Christian Church in those first Ages. The Advantages we have from the Writings of the *Fathers* are unspeakable: they abound with all kinds of Divine Learning, being fraught with most Pious Discourses, Letters, Dialogues, Histories, Dif-

Disputations, Decisions, Moral Precepts, Apologies, Councils, Canons, Commentaries and Expositions of Scripture, Sermons, Homilies, Orations, Poems. In brief, they are of such Worth and Excellency, and so necessary in order to the explaining and illustrating some Passages in the Sacred Writings, and several things relating to them, that it may be truly said, that he deserves not the name of a *Divine* who hath not been conversant in these Writings. Besides, there is Reason we should highly Value and Prize their Writings, because these Persons were generally more *Holy* than those of succeeding Times. Their Honesty and Integrity purged their Understandings, and they would not Wilfully run into Mistakes. Likewise, they were Men of Spirit and Courage, and so would not Sneakingly abandon the Truth: they that would Die for the Faith would not Corrupt and Pervert it. Nor were they Covetous Men, and on that account like to be Bribed into Error. Lastly, the most of them were Modest and Self-denying Persons, and so were not liable to the Mistakes which Pride and Self-Conceit betray Men to, Yet, notwithstanding all this, they were but Men, (as I have said) they were liable to Error and Falshood. And it is fitting we should take Notice of it,

it, that we may beware of their Mistakes, and not make their Judgments the Exact measure of Ours in all things. Many of these Errors which I am now to set down are Observ'd by *Mr. Daille* and others: but most of them are Remark'd from my Own particular Reading and Perusing of those Writings: for I should blush to put the Reader off with second hand Collections, and mere Gleanings from others. I will mention first the *Greek* and than the *Latin Fathers*, I mean the *Chief* and *most Eminent* of both.

Among the *Greek Fathers* I begin with *Irenaeus*, who was *St. John's* Scholar but once Removed, (for he was Disciple of *Polycarp*, and he of the Evangelist) you will find him giving Credit in his *Writings* to That Report which I before mentioned, that Christ lived upon Earth till he was almost Fifty Years of Age: which was first grounded without doubt on what the *Jews* said to our Saviour in *John* 8. 57. *Thou art not yet Fifty Years old.* The same Father held that the Day of Judgment is so Known to God the Father Only that the Son knoweth not at all of it. He hath This Fond Notion * that Souls Departed shall keep the Character and Shape of the

P Bodies

* De usu Patrum. † Adv. Hæreses. l. 2. cap. 39.
 || Ibid. Ibid.

Bodies which they left, & that they retain their Humane Figure and may be Known by it. He asserts that (a) Christ preached to the Ancient Patriarchs in Hell, or *Limbus*, as also to the Righteous Jews and Pagans there, and delivered them thence.

Justin Martyr, that Worthy Saint, hath his Failings in some part of his Writings, the Grosest whereof is That, (b) that God at first created that Luminary Glorious the Sun, that it might be Worshipped. He hath these Harsh Words, that (c) all the Gentiles who lived according to the rule of Reason were Christians, though some of them were accounted as Atheists. From (d) some places of this Writer is plain that it was his Opinion that *Christianity* and *Judaism* might do well together, and a Man might be saved that followed both. He holds that the Separate Souls of the Righteous are in (e) a Suffering State till the Day of Judgment: and (f) that the Souls of the Wicked shall at last cease to exist. But he contradicts this in another Place. He thinks that the Evil Angels accompanying with Women begot Demons or Devils, *Apol. 1.* *Clement*

(a) Lib. 4. 8. & 9.

(b) Τὸν ἥλιον ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν πρῶτον οἷς τὸ προσκυνεῖν αὐτόν.

(c) *Apol. 2.*

(d) *Dialog. cum Tryph.*

(e) *Dialog. p. 222, 223.*

(f) *Pag. 224.*

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* Strom

Clemens Alexandrianus Mistook in his Chronology when he wrote that five Thousand seven Hundred eighty four Years, two Months, and twelve Days were past from *Adam* to the Death of *Commodus* the Emperour. Strom. l. i. He asserts that the Philosophy of the *Gentiles* was Sufficient to them for Salvation. He hath sometimes very Strange Passages concerning *Christ*, favouring of that which afterwards was call'd *Arianism*. He hath many Odd and Wild Conceits in his *Stromata*, which he calleth so because of the Variety of Matter contain'd in those Books. They are indeed a mere Farce, an Indigested Medley of Crude Notions in Divinity: though it must be acknowledg'd that there are all along interspersed very Excellent Precepts of Morality, and Choicè Directions for Life. There, I remember, he asserts * upon the stock of Tradition that *Christ* Preached but one Year upon Earth (there is only Nineteen Years difference between this and the forenamed Tradition:) and that the † Apostles went down to Hell or *Limbus* rather, and preach'd to those Jews and Heathens who were ignorant of the Christian Faith. He seems to disbelieve || Original Sin and the Corruption of Man's Nature. He under-

P 2

stands

* Strom. l. i. † Strom. l. 6. || Lib. 3

stands the making of Man after God's Image, Gen. 1. 26. of the * *Platonick Ideas*, i. e. the Exemplar of Man in God's Mind. And as to his Books which he entitles *Hypotyposes*, Photinus tells us (*Biblioth. num.* 309.) that although in some things he seems to speak rightly, yet in others he lashes out into impious and fabulous Doctrines. And he gives a particular Catalogue of them immediately after. And that Learned Critick adds that in many other things he blasphemes and trifles, which is very harshly pronounced.

Origen's Writings are acknowledg'd by all to be very Faulty. His Books *αρχαί* should be Plain, Solid and Sound according to the Title, for *Principles* should be such. But they are a Confused Heap of Notions concerning God, the World, the Soul, Angels, the Resurrection, Hell, &c. and all mixt with groundless Conjectures, wild Freaks, and inconsistent Opinions, especially taken from the *Platonick Schools*. He holds that God hath Parts and Members like a Man, and the *Anthropomorphites* took their Opinion from Him. He hath many things concerning the Second Person in the Holy Trinity which are very derogatory to this Divinity: and for this he is blamed by

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by St. Jerom (Epist. 59.) and by Epiphanius (Hæref. 64.) and St. Augustin (de Hæref.) He is bold to say that (a) neither God, the Son nor Holy Ghost have an Exact and Perfect Knowledge of God the Father. Yea, Photinus saith of him, that (b) *he writes many things blasphemously concerning the Trinity, and delivers other things that are very absurd and full of impiety, as the Transmigration of Souls, the Animation of the Stars, and the like Vanities.* Nay, he not only holds that the Sun and other Heavenly Bodies are endued with Life, but that (c) they have Understanding, and are capable of Sinning, and of Damnation, or the contrary. The groundless Doctrine of Præexistence is His; he asserts (d) that all Souls, even our Saviours, were created before the Bodies, and for some miscarriage thrust into them afterwards. He held that (e) Christ's Passion would be Available to the Devils, and that (f) there shall be an End of the Torments of the Devils and Damned, and they shall all be Saved at last: and that (g) there shall

P 3 be

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- (a) Περὶ ἀρχῶν. l. 1.
 (b) Bibliothec. num. 8.
 (c) Περὶ ἀρχῶν. l. 1. c. 7. Lib. 5. cont. Cels.
 (d) Ibid. lib. 2. Cont. Cels. l. 1.
 (e) Lib. 4.
 (f) Lib. 1. & 3.
 (g) Lib. 1. Et Tract. 33. in Matth.

be a Perpetual Propagation and Succession of Worlds. In his *Homilies* on the Sacred Scriptures he hath very Strange things. He intermixeth several Errors about the most Substantial Points of our Religion: and his Constant fault is that he interprets Texts Allegorically, and despises the Literal Sense: for which he was condemned in the fifth General Council. Throughout all his Works he maintains *Free Will* to that height that he owns no difference between *Adam's State* in Innocency, and that afterwards. In short, *Origen* was rather a *Heretick* than a *Father*, and was so reckoned by some of the Antients, as you shall hear afterwards. *Luther* was so dissatisfied with his Works, that he saith, * according to his Bold way, In All *Origen* there is not so much as One Word of Christ. Which harsh censure we may qualify by saying (and that most truly) that his Works discover in them more of a *Platonist* than a *Christian*. However, on several accounts the Writings of this Profound Scholar are of great use in the Christian Church.

Concerning *Eusebius*, who was in some respects the Learnedst Father of his time, there are different Sentiments: he was no *Arian*, saith † *Socrates*, positively telling

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* Colloqu. Mensal.

† Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 21.

us that he approved of *iusias*: and
 * *Gelasius Cyzicenus* attests the same. Yet
 that he was infected with *Arianism* is tes-
 tified by *Athanasius* and *Jerom* in several
 places, and by *Basil*, *Epiphanius*, *Hilary*,
Theodoret, *Sozomen*. But these may be
 understood thus, that they mean it of his
 being of that Opinion till the time of the
Nicene Council, where he retracted it,
 and subscribed to the Canons. As for his
Writings, it is evident that there are se-
 veral blameable Passages in them: he
 † distinguishes *Cephas*, who was rebuked
 by St. Paul at *Antioch*, from the Apostle
 St. Peter, though he was the same Per-
 son. He || confounds *Novatus* and *Novat-
 ian*, as if they were but one Man. In
 his Books of *Evangelical Preparation* and
Demonstration he seems to deny the Di-
 vinity of the Holy Ghost: and in the
 (a.) former of them he declares that the
 Son is not to be worship'd by us but upon the
 account of the Father, and that he deserves
 not equal honour with the Father. Con-
 cerning the Persons in the Sacred Trinity
 he hath unsafe Words in his (b.) *Ecclesi-
 astical History*. *Photius*, no mean Judge,

P 4

* In Añ. Concil. Nicen.

† Eccl. Hist. l. 11. c. 13.

|| Eccl. Hist. l. 2. c. 10.

(a.) Evan. Prep. l. 5. c. 4. & 8.

(b.) Lib. 1. cap. 3. Lib. 2. cap. 7.

is bold to say, that *he is blasphemous against the Son of God*, and that in his Works there are other * *Springs of the Arianick madness*. This is very severe, and perhaps may rightly be mollified thus, Though *Eusebius* was not properly speaking an *Arian*, as might be proved out of abundant express Passages in his Writings, much less was he the Head of the *Arians*, as St. *Jerom* styles him, yet he hath very unsound Expressions concerning the *Trinity*; and he that denies this proves that he hath not read this Writer. See his more particular mistakes about the *Trinity* collected by Monsieur *Du Pin*, in his *Bibliothèque*, Century the Fourth.

Epiphanius is Erroneous in many things, saith *Drusus*, particularly when he saith, that these Words, *My Father is greater than I*, are true of the Divine Nature. He holds that the † *Image of God*, according to which Man was created, was neither in his Body nor Soul, and cannot be known by us. *Moses* was but thirty Years Old, || he saith, when he conducted the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, though according to the Sacred History he was eighty Years of Age. His Calculation was likewise false when he asserted that the

* Τὸς Ἀρειανικῆς λύσεως βλασφημία. Bibliothec. num. 9.

† Hæres. 70.

|| Ancorat.

the * Destruction of *Jerusalem* was sixty five Years after Christ's Passion. And in several other things he is accused of Historical Mistakes by *Baronius*, Tom. 3. From his want of Skill in the *Hebrew* Tongue he tells us that † *Jesus* is call'd a *Physician* in that Language. The most common and remarkable Fault (which is a pardonable one) of this Writer is that he uses Tautologies.

St. *John*, furnamed *Chrysostom*, the best Speaker of all the Fathers, is partly guilty of the same Fault: and besides, he frequently digresses from the Point, and proceeds to foreign Matters, as if he did not consider what the Subject was that he was upon. But as to any positive Errors, there are none worth taking notice of but those which were common to Him with the rest of the Antient Fathers, a Catalogue of which I shall give you anon.

I pass from the *Greek* Fathers to the *Latin* ones, the First whereof was *Tertullian* in the Third Century, for there were no *Latin* Fathers (*i. e.* such who writ in that Tongue) in the two first Ages. It was a Great Chronological Mistake when, speaking of the *Version* of the *seventy Interpreters*, he saith that *Pto-*
lomy

* De ponderib, & mensuris.

† Hæref. 19.

Iomy King of *Egypt* sent Ambassadors to *Herod* King of *Judea* about it; whereas they were sent to the High Priest *Eleazar* above two Hundred Years before *Herod* reigned in *Judea*. Such an Other Oversight was that when he writeth that *David* lived one Thousand five Hundred Years before *Christ* was Crucified, whereas there were not above a Thousand or thereabouts between the one and the other. His Reasons (which are Six) against *Wearing of Garlands* on the Head are very Weak and Frivolous. * One is that the Head is an Improper place for *Flowers*, because they can neither be seen nor smelt there. An Other is, that the Man is the Crown of the Woman, as *Christ* is of the Man, *Ergo*. This Father favours in many places the *Montanists*, he utterly Condemneth as Sinful † all *Flight* in time of Persecution. He holds || it is Unlawful for a Christian to be a Soldier, and to go to War. He talks much like a Quaker in his Treatises of *Idolatry*, and of a *Soldiers Crown*, he is against wearing of Gold and Purple, he dislikes all *Habits of Honour* in a Magistrate, and indeed shews himself no friend to Magistracy it self. This same Writer

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* De Coronâ militis.

† De Fugâ, &c.

|| De Idololat. De Corn. milit.

undertakes throughout a whole Treatise, viz. of the Soul, to prove that the Soul of Man is Corporeal, and that after its Separation it retains the same figure and shape that the Body, in which it was enclosed, had; whence we read of *Dives's Tongue*, *Lazarus's Finger*, *Abraham's Bosom*. In the same place he holds that Souls have Sexes as well as the Body. And it is no wonder that he asserts Humane Souls to be Material and Corporeal, when he holds that * God himself hath a Body. He asserts that the Souls of Martyrs only go to *Abraham's Bosom* or *Paradise*, the rest *ad Inferos*. De Anim. c. 55. The Souls of the Damned feel nothing, he saith, because he holds the Soul can't have any Sense without the Body. Apolog. cap. 48. The Man only is the *Image* and *Likeness* of God, not the Woman, *de Vel. Virginib.* c. 1. He † ascribeth the Passion and Commotion of *Anger* (in the Proper acceptation of it) to God, though indeed *Pamelius* endeavours to Clear him of it. He asserteth in Express Terms || that the Son of God had a Beginning. From these Particulars (and from several others which I mention not because he deliver'd them when

* Cont. Marcion. l. 2 c. 16.

† Cont. Marcion. l. 1. c. 29. l. 2. c. 16.

|| Tempus fuit cum Filius non fuit. Lib. cont. Hermogen.

when he was a profess'd *Montonist*, and had left the Catholick Communion) from these, I say, it appeareth that *Tertullian* may pass for an Heretick as well as *Origen*, he having so Many Unsafe and (which is the worst) so many Unsound and Erroneous Doctrines. He was otherwise an Excellent Writer, in whom Wit, Learning, and Eloquence every where display themselves. Let us therefore make use of his *Pallium* to Cover his Imperfections, and to Hide all his Errors and Mistakes.

The next Father of Note was that Blessed Martyr St. *Cyprian*, who used constantly to Read *Tertullian*, and to Call him his Master. And it is not unlikely that his Extraordinary Affection to his Writings did not only corrupt his Stile but made him imbibe some of his Errors: which is to be seen in his favouring of *Montanism* sometimes. In one * place he seems to be of the same mind with *Epicurus*, for he holds that God concerns not himself with the Affairs of the World, but commits the Government of them to the Care of Angels. He held † that Personal Holiness was Indispensably requisite in an Ecclesiastical Minister, and that none ought to Baptize or deliver the Eu-

* *Expositio Symboli.*

† *In Epistolis.*

Eucharist unless they had the Holy Spirit. * He held (as also did † *Clemens* the *Alexandrian*, and ‖ *Theodoret*) that the meaning of those Words of *David*, *the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment*, Psal. 5. 1. is that the wicked shall not rise at the last day, or that they shall not rise to be Judged, because they are condemned already, according to that of Christ, *John* 3. 18. He allows of * Praying for the dead: He was so far an *Anabaptist* that he asserted a Necessity of Re-baptizing those who had been baptized by Hereticks: whose Practise as to this the *Donatists* followed afterwards, and Re-baptized all who came over to them. But the *Nicene Council* and Others determined the Contrary, viz. that Baptism conferred by Heretick Ministers is Valid, and not to be Reiterated if the Right Form of Baptism was used.

Arnobius was a mere Novice in Christianity, fitter to refute Paganism than maintain Christianity. He holds the Soul of Man (as that of beasts) to be † Corporeal, and in its own nature Mortal. He saith the Souls of the Wicked shall be utterly Annihilated, (which also *Minutius Felix* seems to assert:) and other Un-
safe

* Lib. 3. ad Quirinum.

† Strom. 2.

‖ In Psalm. 1.

Epist. 66.

† Lib. 2.

safe things he delivered, being not well skill'd in the Holy Scriptures: for he wrote his Book against the *Gentiles* when he was but a *Catechumen*, and did not well understand the Articles of the Christian Religion. But otherwise he is an Admirable Writer, and hath with great Wit, Eloquence and Zeal baffled every part of the Pagan Religion.

As for *Lactantius*, he was a Great Man for Correcting the Errors of Philosophers and Others, but is Himself to be Corrected the most of any Christian Writer of old. He miserably Mistakes the Philosophers and their Opinions, and even when they are in the Right he Contradicteth them, as when he holds (a) the Doctrine of *Antipodes* to be Absurd and Impossible, and denieth the Heavens to be of a Round Figure, which also Other Fathers doubt of, as *Justin*, *Basil*, *Ambrose* and *Chrysostom*. He hath very Erroneous Sentiments (b) concerning the Creation, Nature and Office of *Angels*. His Errors about the *Soul* are (c) that they were Created all Together in Heaven, and that (d) they are parts of God's Substance. He is Heterodox and dangerously False (e) about

(a) Institut. l. 3. c. 23, 24.

(b) Institut. l. 2. c. 15.

(c) Ibid. l. 2. c. 9, 11.

(d) Ibid. l. 2. c. 10, 13. Lib. 4. c. 6.

(e) about the Sacred Trinity. He holds that (f) whatsoever is, once began to be, and from thence believeth that God begot or made himself. (g) He denieth Christ to be God, and the Holy Spirit to be a Person or Substance. He hath Intolerable Odd Fancies about the World, Providence, Man, and most things that he treateth of. He hath Strange Dreams about the End of the World, the Last Judgment, the Resurrection, the Close of all things, and the Coming of Christ. According to him (h) our Saviour preach'd but one Year, and was Crucified in the Thirtieth Year of his Age. And indeed the same is said by (i) *Tertullian* and (k) *Clement of Alexandria*. Briefly, This Writer is stuffed with Errors and Hæresies every where, and those most Gross ones. He hath Poor and Weak Arguments about the Greatest and most Important things of Religion. He is Blameable in every Chapter almost for some thing that is Singular, Fanciful, Absurd, and even Ridiculous. He hath this Fault too that he is off and on, and Forgets what he had asserted before in Other Places. But we ought to alledge in his Excuse that he was a Novice in the Christian Religion.

(e) Lib. 4. (f) Lib. 1. c. 7. (g) Lib. 4. c. 14.

(h) Lib. 4. cap. 10. (i) Cont. Judæos cap. 8.

(k) Strom. l. 1. & 6.

on. Some * say it was Late before he came to any Knowledge of That Way, and that he Writ when he was Old and Decrepid. Hence it is that he goes not on Right Grounds, and shamefully Mistaketh in almost All the Accounts which he gives of Christianity, and the things which relate to it. *Lactantius* his Excellency is, his Pure and Elegant Stile, and no other thing is Eminent in him, saith *St. Jeram.* Though he hath the Worst Divinity, he hath the best *Latin* of all the Fathers. In him and *Cyprian* (especially in the former) is the Genuine Purity of the *Roman* Tongue: wherefore let us prize him for that. But besides, the *Moral* part of his Writings is most excellent and ravishing, and never were Virtues and Vices described with a nobler Spirit, and a more Exalted flame of Piety.

Hilary, though a very Pious and Good Man, a Devout and Religious Father, hath several strange and groundless Notions in his Writings. † God first created the Soul of Man, and then his Body, saith he. He thinks that || the Divinity of Christ was separated from his Humanity at the time of his Death. * He denies

* Baronius.

† Comment. in Psal. 129.

|| Comment. in Matth. Can. 33.

* De Trinit. lib. 10.

nies that our Saviour had such a Body as was capable of Hunger and Thirst, and Weariness, and the like Infirmities. He holds these were not Natural and Real, but assumed and seeming Affections. He expressly saith, (a) *Christ had not any Fear, Sorrow or Pain, but only a certain Representation of those Passions within him, but they were not truly in him.* In another place he asserts that (b) *Christ had no fear of Death, notwithstanding his Agonies in the Garden and on the Cross.* And again, (c) *Christ did not truly and really suffer.* And more than once in his *Book of the Trinity* it is affirm'd by him that Christ's Passion was without any Grief or Pain. (d) He tells us that all Souls, and the Virgin Mary's among the rest, shall be purg'd with Fire at the last Day. (e) He seems to assert the Corporeity of. Humane Souls (f) He holds that the Wicked shall not be Judged at the last Day, because they are condemned already. He is too *Allegorical* in explaining many places of Scripture, and often applies them to those things to which they have no relation at all. In most of his Writings he too lavishly ex-

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tols

(a) Ibid.

(b) In Matth. Can. 31.

(c) Comment. in Psal. 54.

(d) In Psal. 118.

(e) Comment. in Matth. Can. 5.

(f) In Psal. 1. & Psal. 57.

tols the power of Free Will, and asserts the Merit of Works, and allows of Praying to Saints. See his Errors more particularly taken notice of by Dr. Du Pin, under the Fourth Century.

Concerning St. Jerom that of Luther was too severe and uncharitable, that * *he hath nothing of Christ in his Works*; but this may truly be said that he had his Errors and Failings no less than other Antient Writers. † He seems to deny both the Knowledge and Providence of God as to little and petty Matters in the World. || He saith St. Paul dissembled, and acted a part when he reproved St. Peter. He hath several Extravagant Commendations of Fasting and Virginitie, as if they were Meritorious. He condemns all Oaths in his Commentary on the Fifth of St. Matthew. What he said of Origen, viz. that he spoke some things which he did not really think and believe, he was guilty of himself. We shall find him very inconstant in his Assertions: or, to speak more mildly of him, he sometimes delivers his own Mind, at other times the probable Opinions of others. As to his Commentaries, he confesses himself that he often dictated

* Colloq. Mensal.

† In cap. 1. Habakkuk.

|| Comment. in Epist. ad Galat.

ted to his *Amanuenses* not his own Notions, but what he had from Jews and other Commentators. He accusom'd himself to say things sometimes in one manner, and afterwards in a different or contrary way for dispute sake, as is plain to those who read him : and he makes St. Paul his Patron for it, as if the Apostle quoted Scripture in his *Epistles* merely to serve his purpose, and to oppose his Adversaries. *You will see, * saith he, in his Quotations out of the Old Testament how prudently and dissemblingly he acts.* In an other place (50th Epistle) he is not asham'd to say that the Evangelists and Apostles, and especially St. Paul abused the Texts of the Old Testament, and applied them to their purpose, though they were not. † One Apologizes for him by telling us that most of his Books were compos'd by him when he was Old, and when his Memory was bad. It may truly be said of him that he was a Man of infinite Worth, of a Noble Stile, and of very Sublime Thoughts, but *there is more of Vivacity and Vehemency in his Works than Exactness and Solidity* : which is the Censure that a late || Learned Critick hath pass'd upon him.

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That

* Apolog. adv. Rufinum.

† Druf. Observat. l. 8. c. 3.

|| Du Pin

That Holy Father St. *Augustin* had his Errors. If we speak of Lesser Matters, we may Observe that in * several places he enclines to say that the Soul of Man is *ex traduce*. He (as well as *Lactantius*) denieth † *Antipodes*, and declares that it is a Fable, and void of all Reason. But in *Divinity* as well as Philosophy you will find this Good Man tripping. He asserts Angels to be Corporeal, and he is not Certain (he saith) || whether the Sun and Moon and Stars do not belong to the Society of Angels. His Treatise of the *Trinity* is very inconsequential in many parts of it, he therein endeavouring from *every thing* almost to prove that Sacred Doctrine. His Whole *Book of the City of God* is a Strange *Cento*, a Piece made of Divers Shreds in a Disturbed manner. They say it was writ on occasion of the *Goths* taking *Rome*: truly it seemeth to partake of that Disorder and Confusion. The * *Parisian Critick* plainly tells us that the Father in those Books discusses very Useless Questions, and sometimes makes use of Arguments and Reasons too weak to convince those who are inclin'd to doubt of what he designs to prove. But

see-

* Epist. 28. & 157. De Anima & ejus Origine, cap. 14.

† De Civ. Dei lib. 16. cap. 5.

|| *Enchirid.* cap. 58.

* Dr. Du Pin.

seeing several Slips in his Writings are taken notice of by himself, and are publicly *retracted* in a Piece which he drew up at the Close of his Life, it would be disingenuous and unchristian to proceed here any further, and to aggravate his Errors; especially seeing he is on many accounts an Author of unspeakable Worth and Eminency, of whose Books it may be truly pronounced that a Man may from them know the Doctrine, Discipline and Customs of the Church at that time better than from any one Writer that we can name.

Thus I have given a short account of the Failings of some of the most Antient and Learned Fathers in their Writings: which I hope will not be interpreted as an Argument of my disrespect to those Worthy and Renown'd Lights of the Church, but as a Proof rather of my Sincerity and Faithfulness in prosecuting the Subject I have undertaken to insist upon: wherein it was necessary, if I would be impartial, to take notice even of the Errors of those Excellent Men, whose *Antiquity* and *Authority* have made them Venerable.

To which might be pertinently added that in the Catalogue of *Hereticks* in *Irenaeus*, *Epiphanius*, *Augustin* and others, some are reckon'd as *Hereticks* who are not

such on that account which they are set down for. Thus *Aerius* is made an Heretick for disallowing Prayer for the Dead. The *Offeni* are *Hereticks* because they refused to Worship towards the *East*. And so it might be observ'd of the *Quartodecimani*, and others. This is the thing, sometimes they made what *Hereticks* they pleased; and herein they shewed *themselves*, if not Heretical, very Erroneous and liable to Mistake.

But these Particulars which I have hitherto mention'd were the Errors of *Particular Fathers*. Next, I will shew you that there were also Some wherein *Many* and sometimes *Most* of the Fathers joined. As first, they All of them adhere to *Vulgar Errors* as much as Other Men. They take up the Common Stories of the *Pelicans* way of feeding her Young, of the Infectious Eye-shot of the *Basilisk*, of the *Salamanders* living in Flames, of that Rare Bird the *Phenix*, how she expires in her bed of Spices, and makes way for an other *Phenix* to rise out of her Ashes. These and several other such Fabulous things are believ'd by them, and applied very seriously to the most Weighty Points in Religion. But I will confine my self to Scripture and Theology. In the next place then, Those words in *Gen. 6. 4. When the Sons of God came in*
unto

unto the Daughters of Men, and they bare Children to them; the same became Mighty Men, are Thus Interpreted by the * Generality of the Fathers, viz. that in the Time of the Old World the Unclean Spirits or Angels were Tempted and Overcome with the Beauty of Women, and lay with the Daughters of Cain, and thence begot Giants. Tertullian † therefore would have Women Vailed in the Church, lest their Beauty should be a Temptation to the Angels, even the Good ones, to make them fall in Love with them, and Lust after them. I could shew you that in many other Interpretations they seem as it were to Agree to Mistake the Places. But their Grand fault about the Scriptures is their Wresting of them. There are scarce any of the Fathers who do not sometimes Distort the Holy Writ, especially when they grapple with their Adversaries, and are eager upon Confuting them. This he that reads their Writings may see is their Common Fault. Then, as to General Opinions among

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them,

* Justin Martyr. Apol. ad Sen. Rom. Athenagoras Legat. pro Christian. Clem. Alex. Pædag. l. 3. c. 12. & Strom. 3. & 5. Tertull. de Idol. c. 9. De cultu fæm. c. 10. De veland. virgin. c. 7. Cyprian de discip. Virg. Lactant. Instit. l. 2. c. 15. Euseb. de præp. Evang. l. 5. c. 4. Ambros. lib. de Noe, c. 4. Sulpit. Sever. hist. sac. l. 1. c. 3.

† De habitu. mulierum.

them, *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian,* and others before mentioned Erred concerning the *Millenary* Reign of Christ upon Earth, and their Conceptions of it were very Earthly and Gross. This Opinion prevail'd three hundred Years in the Church, and the Christians of Those Times were generally *Chiliasts*. So we read that the Fathers and other Christians both of the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches thought themselves Bound by That Decree of the Apostles in the first Synod at *Jerusalem*, *Act. 15. 20.* and therefore abstain'd from Eating of Blood. This was an Universal Mistake for a * Long Time. But *Infant Communicating* was an Other Catholick Doctrine, and continued Longer. Herein All the Fathers Agreed, who Misunderstanding and Misapplying Christ's Words in *John 6. 53. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you,* held that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be administred to Infants and Children, and that it was Necessary for them to their Salvation; accordingly they made them partakers of That Ordinance. It was believed also by Most of the Fathers, and

* Si quo in dogmate gloriari liceat de Traditionis Universalitate & Constantia, istud est vel inter prima, Sanguine non licere vesci. Curcellæus. Diatr. de esu sang. cap. 13.

and by them peremptorily Asserted that the Souls of the Faithful are not in *Heaven* before the Day of Judgment, or rather before the Glory which is to follow immediately that Judgment, and that those Souls are kept in certain Receptacles till That Time. Again, the Utter Unlawfulness of *Second Marriages* was a Doctrine that the Generality of the Antient Fathers avouched. One of the First Christian Writers and Fathers tells us * that Marrying Again is but a Handsome kind of Adultery. It is Condemned by those Other two Greek Fathers, *Clemens Alexandrinus* and *Nazianzen*. *Tertullian* hath a Tractate † on purpose wherein he Argues for Single Marriage, and against all Second ones, which he pronounceth to be absolutely Unlawful. As for *St. Chrysostom*, || he lets us know his Judgment, Plainly telling us that That sort of Marriages is Downright Fornication. Most of them were excessive in their Praises of *Virginity*, in so much that they vilify and condemn sometimes a Married Life. They generally believ'd and asserted that not only *Christ* but the *Apostles* descended into Hell, and there preached to Jews and Gen-

* *Ἀποτρεῖς τὴν γαμὸν ἐν πνεύματι καὶ μοιχεύει.* Athenagoras Apol. pro Christian.

† De Monogamia.

|| Homil. 32.

Gentiles, to convert those of them that had been of Innocent Lives on Earth, and to bring them to a Belief in Jesus Christ. Most of them are too Extravagant in extolling Man's Free Will, and the Power of Nature. *Cyprian* and Most of the Other Bishops of *Africa* defended with great zeal and vigour the *Rebaptizing* of those who had been baptized by Hereticks : whereas the Bishop of *Rome* that then was stiffly Opposed it, and call'd a Council, and Decreed the contrary, and *Cyprian* and the Other *African* Bishops were Censured. But whether here was any Great Matter of Truth concerned or no, I will not now enquire.

I could here also take notice how the Writings of the Fathers do generally justify those Rites, Usages and Ceremonies which were Preparatives to Popery. For my part, I have been Ashamed to see how Some Men sweat to Answer several Places in the Antient Fathers Works, which the *Papists* alledge in defence of their Ceremonies and Superstitious Observances. Why do *Protestants* strive to Excuse the *Fathers* in this, and to Palliate their Writings ? This is not the thing that is to be done : but rather let them Confess plainly that even those Early *Fathers* were in some measure Infected.

fected. Though there are Quotations sufficient to be produced out of These Writers to Baffle the *Popish* Ceremonies, yet there are Other Places which too much favour them. I know there are Some who endeavour to Vindicate the Fathers as to this: nay further, they would Clear them from holding any Doctrine which is a part of *Papery* at this Day. A late Learned Writer amongst us, is (in my Opinion) extremely faulty in this kind. He is such a rigid asserter of *Antiquity* (especially when it pleaseth him) that he makes nothing of censuring and even of condemning any Person or Church that doth not in every Punctilio speak and practise according to the Doctrine and Customs of the *Antient Fathers* and *Churches*. This intolerable Boldness and Presumption he hath a long time indulged himself in, and he goes on still to foster his arrogant Humour. After the rate of his reasoning and arguing from *Antiquity* and the *Fathers*, the Church of *England* or the greatest part of it is Schismatical, as well as most *Foreign* ones are. He unchurcheth Us and all the Christian Churches in the World together. A Man of his Parts and Learning should with more modesty treat his *Mother*, if she be so. It is unreasonable to blast our *First Reformers*, and to condemn every

every thing in our *Reformation* which is not adjusted to some Antient Custom in former times, or is not exactly conformable to what some of the Fathers have asserted. They tell us of *Oyl* and *Spittle*, *Milk* and *Honey*, and several other Ceremonies then used : which concern not us at all, because these were superstitiously introduced into some Churches in those early times, and were the Forerunners and Preparatives (as I said before) to the *Roman* Superstition and Idolatry. Many Shifts are used to clear the Antients as to this Matter, but all in vain. They can never be Wholly vindicated, for Many of them, though they kept the Foundation, yet built *Stubble* upon it. Even some of the most Pious Fathers were faulty here.

And thus I have briefly made Good what I undertook, *viz.* to prove that the most Antient, Learned and Godly *Fathers* have mix'd Errors with their Writings, yea that the Greatest part of them sometimes Agree in Falshood. If they could Appear on Earth and hear This my Charge against them, they would not be Offended at it, they would not be Displeased with me for it. This I am Certain of because *They themselves* were very Sensible of This which I have Asserted, *viz.* that they were Fallible and Erroneous,

ous, that they had their Slips and Oversight, that in their Writings there were to be found many Mistakes and Deviations from the Truth. For This very thing they were wont freely to Blame One another, and Themselves too. This is Worth our Taking Notice of, and it will likewise be a Vindication of what I have said, and excuse my Freedom on this Subject. St. *Jerom* speaking of *Tertullian* uses This Liberty of Speech, * *We Praise his Wit, but Condemn his Heresy*. And concerning his Treatise of *Monogamy*, this Father † declares that it is *Heretical*. How frequently are *Origen's* Works Censured by the Fathers? Though he hath some Friends among them, and *Eusebius*, *Ruffinus* and *Chrysostom* plead for him, yet *Epiphanius* || places him in the List of *Hereticks*, and would have his Works Sentenced as *Heretical* by a Synod. And so they were indeed in the Fifth General Council of *Constantinople*, about the middle of the Sixth Century. Besides that the *Origenists* were Condemned in a Synod at *Alexandria* an other time. *Basil* blames this Father for Unsound and Dangerous Opinions. *Theophilus* Bishop of *Alexandria* goes Higher a great deal, and fear-
eth

* In *Tertulliano* laudamus Ingenium, sed damnamus Heresin.

† In Cap. 1. Epist. ad Tit.

|| *Heret. 64.*

eth not to say (as *Jerom* * relateth) that he surpassed all Hereticks in the Greatness of his Blasphemy. *Jerom* himself takes notice † of the Bold and Blaphemous Sayings and Opinions of this Father. He Charges him with Wrestling the Scriptures very often, and Forcing a Sense from them. And at an other time he freely Censureth not only *Origen* but Other Writers of the Church. He observes not only of him, but of *Rufinus* and others who writ against *Celsus* and *Porphyrie*, that they writ in a loose and rambling way, and he saith the Latin Writers did the same, as *Tertullian*, *Minutius*, *Lactantius*, and others: they insert Opinions into their Writings which are not their own, yea which are contrary to their Judgment, because || it was necessary to say something in answer to the *Gentiles*. He tells us plainly in other places that the Fathers let fall some things in their Writings carelessly, doubtfully, confusedly, and particularly that before *Arian's* time they deliver'd some things * unadvisedly, and with little heed to what

Omnes Haereticos magnitudine Blasphemiae superat
Origenes.

† In Epist. 59. ad Avitum.

|| Quia inrerdum coguntur loqui, non quod sentiunt, sed quod necesse est. Epist. 50. ad Pammach. Apolog. cont. Jovin. cap. 4.

* Innocenter quædam & minus caute loquuti sunt, & quæ non possint perversorum hominum calumniam declinare.

what they said, in so much that they could not but incur the censures and evils of those perverse Men who had leisure to look into their Writings. In an Epistle to his Friend, giving him an Account of his Opinion of *Origen*, and how his Works were to be Read, he delivers his Mind thus, “* I conceive *Origen* is an Author sometimes to be Read because of his Learning; for which reason also *Tertullian*, *Novatus*, *Arnobius*, *Apollinaris*, and some Ecclesiastical Writers both Greek and Latin are to be Perused: But How? Namely, we are to pick out the things that are Good in them, and we are to lay aside, and have nothing to do with the Contrary. If the same be said of *St. Jerom* himself, he cannot take it ill. And indeed there are Those who have been very Free with this Father, especially *Ruffinus*, who objects divers things to him, and representeth him as very Rash and Unadvised, and sometimes very Erroneous and False in his Writings. Yea, *Jerom* himself confesses of his own Writings that though sometimes † he speaks

* Ego Origenem propter eruditionem sic interdum legendum arbitror quomodo Tertullianum, Novatum, Arnobium, Apollinarium, & non nullos Ecclesiasticos Scriptores, Græcos pariter & Latinos, ut bona eorum Eligamus, vitemusq; contraria, &c. Ad Tranquillinum.

† Hieron. adv. Ruff. l. 2. & in Epist. ad Augustin.

speaks *dogmatically*, in a positive and serious way, yet at other times (which is very often) he speaks only *probably* and *gymnastically* (it is his own Word), i. e. like a Rhetorician, for exercise and dispute sake.

But of all the Fathers St. *Augustin* is the most Free and Ingenuous in acknowledging the Faults that not only are in Others Writings, but in his Own. When a *Donatist*, with whom he disputed, quoted a Passage out of *Cyprian* against him, Observe what he said to him, “ * Now
“ seeing it is not Canonical (that is,
“ Holy Scripture) which thou alledgest,
“ by virtue of that Liberty to which the
“ Lord hath called us, I do not approve
“ of that Opinion, differing from Scrip-
“ ture, although it be the Opinion of a
“ Person who can never enough be
“ praised, with whose great Learning I
“ do not compare my Writings, whose
“ Wit I love, whose Speech I am de-
“ lighted with, whose Charity I wonder
“ at, whose Martyrdom I reverence. Thus
He. † St. *Cyprian*, though so Excellent a
Man, was not free from Error; his Writ-
ings were not Inspired Scripture, and so
not Infallible : therefore St. *Augustin*
would

* Nunc vero quoniam Canonicum non est quod recitas,
&c. Contr. Cresc. 2. 32.

would not Rely upon them. And he was as unwilling to Depend upon any Other Persons that were Eminent in the Church, and that for the same Reason. We must not (saith he) be of the Opinion of the most Catholick Bishops whenever they chance to be in an Error, and hold contrary to the Canon of Scripture given us by God. And this Rule was constantly observ'd by this Pious Father, in so much that he had as much Work and Labour to Get off from the Writings of the *Fathers* sometimes; as he had to baffle those of the *Hereticks*. And not only Other Mens Works but his Own were Censured by him, as there was Occasion. I cannot deny (saith he) that as in Those who have gone before, so also in My Works there are many things which may Justly without Rashness be blamed. Hence it was that he used to submit his Books to St. *Jerome's* Censure, and to Desire him to be || Severe with him. He professeth that he would have His Own Books no otherwise read than he used to read Other Mens, that is, *not*
R *with*

* Nec Catholicis Episcopis consentiendum est sicubi forte falluntur, aut contra Canonicas Dei Scripturas aliquid sentiunt. Contra Petilianum.

† Ad Vincent. l. 2.

|| Etiam sinceram atq; fraternam severitatem adhibeas quæso. Epist. 8. ad Hieronym.

with a Necessity of Believing, but a Liberty of Judging. And in an Other Place he speaketh Thus, * I would not have you follow my Authority, as if you should think any thing is Necessarily to be believed by you because it is said by Me. And most Worthily and Ingenuously at an Other time he expresseth himself after This manner, † Whosoever readeth these things (which I here write,) where he is as certainly perswaded of any of them as I am, let him (and not before) go along with me : where he is as Doubtful as I am, let him Seek as I do : where he finds (by what I have written) that he hath fallen into an Error, let him Return to me : where he finds that I am fallen into one, let him Reclaim me. I heartily Love such a Spirit as This Father here discovereth : and therefore I will still further shew you More of it in him. This Good Man writ a Book of *Retractions*, wherein he Corrects many things which he had deliver'd in his Other Books. Of This he gives Notice

in his Letter to the Romans, c. 16. v. 25.

* Nolo Authoritatem meam sequaris, ut ideo putes tibi aliquid necesse esse credere quoniam à Me dicitur. Ad Paulin. Epist. 112.

† Quisquis hæc legit, ubi pariter certus est, pergat mecum, ubi pariter hæsitat, quærat mecum : ubi errorem suum cognoscit, redeat ad me ; ubi mecum, revocet me. De Trin. l. 1. c. 3.

in an Other Piece before, * I would have no Man (saith he) so imbrace all my Opinions as to Follow me unless it be in Those things wherein he sees plainly that I do not Err. For indeed to That End I am now about making some Books in which I have undertaken to Retract my Works, that I may thereby demonstrate to the World that I have not Followed even Myself in all things. And if this Father would not be Tied to follow Himself, why should we be confined to follow him or any Other? And if he Corrected Himself when he Erred, why may not We do the same to Him and Others? It is not Disingenuous to take notice of Mistakes (especially such as are Considerable) in any Writers, no not in the Antient Fathers. You see the Worthiest Persons have done it, and have thought it their Duty to do so, as certain it was.

And since that time several † Considerable Persons have thought fit to pass their Judgment on these Antient Writers, and freely to censure their Works. Of

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* Neminem velim sic amplecti omnia mea ut me sequatur, nisi in ijs in quibus me non errare perspexerit. Nam propterea nunc facio libros in quibus opuscula mea retractanda suscepi, ut nec meipsum in omnibus me secutum fuisse demonstrarem. De dono persever. l. 2. c. 21.

† Photius, Sixtus Senensis, Erasmus, Posselinus, Scultetus, Rivet, Labbæus.

this free temper was *Anselm*, who expressly saith, * *There are sometimes found wicked and heretical Doctrines in the Books of the Holy Doctors which the Church authentically reads. Let a prudent Reader, saith he, peruse their Writings, and he will find what I say to be true. That the Fathers have great Errors and Mistakes is the free acknowledgment of † Melchior Canus, one who paid a great Veneration to them, and highly valued their Writings. To this and the foregoing Testimonies concerning this matter I might add that of Luther (which likewise may be the short Application of all that hath been said) || The Fathers, saith he, were but Men, as we, therefore we must read them accordingly, i. e. as the Writings of those that are subject to Error. I was glad to see it fall from the Pen of a late Learned * Writer of the Communion of the Church of Rome, relating how it was thought to be the Opinion of some of the Fathers that the Jews on set purpose depraved some of the Hebrew Bible, that he is not one of those who think themselves obliged to adhere to the Opinion of the Fathers in this matter ; and he applauds St. Augustin for* dis-

* Comment. in Epist. 2. ad Corinth.

† Loc. Commun. l. 11. c. 6.

* Mr. Simon's Critic. Hist.

|| Colloq. Mensal.

dissenting from the rest of the Fathers, and going contrary to the Judgment of almost all the Doctors of his Age in that Point, and he wilheth, that with St. Augustin other Persons would rather consider the Things themselves than the Authority of others. Thus he. But none hath performed this task of censuring the Fathers with more freedom (though with singular Moderation and Ingenuity) than the Learned Author of the Bibliothegue, or New History of Ecclesiastical Writers. He is an Excellent Person, and of a Critical Genius: he hath given the Fathers their due, and withal discovers their Errors and Failings, but with great deference to them. More particularly (in his Preface. Vol. 1.) he observes of them, that They frequently change their stile and manner of Discourse. According as their Circumstances are, (saith he) they writ. He instances more especially in Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Augustin, and remarks how differently they write in different times. And herein he doth but tread in the steps of several of his own Communion before, as Cajetan, who often censures the Fathers Writings, Baronius (Annal. ad an. 34. sect. 213.) Bellarmine (de Verbo Dei l. 3. c. 3. de Christo l. 2. c. 2.) Salmeron (l. 1. Disp. in Epist. St. Pauli.) Maldonate (Comment. in Evangel.) Petavius (in Epiphan.)

and other *Romanists* who have frequently found fault with the Antient Writers of the Church.

After all these Examples, I hope none will be offended with me for the Liberty I have taken in my impartial Animadversions on those Antient Writers. For this is the way to root out Error, and to establish Truth in Religion. Where ever Falshood is found, let it be Acknowledged, that so we may use our selves to make a Difference between That and Truth, And Where can it be done better than in the Writings of the Antient Fathers, which are of such Constant Use in the Church? The Errors and Heterodoxies that are Observ'd here ought not to be Disguised. This I have sufficiently proved from the Practise of these Worthy Men themselves. It may be said here, that there are some Other Passages in their Writings which clear these that I have mention'd. I do not wholly deny this, yea I verily believe that a Man may salve *some* of these by consulting other Places in their Works, and comparing them together: and this indeed is but doing them Justice and Right. But however, most of these things which I have named are in themselves Erroneous Propositions, and may give occasion to those who read the Fathers Writings to be led into the
same

same Mistakes : therefore I thought it not impertinent to my present Design to lay them before the Reader. And yet after all, I must add that these things which I have named ought not to diminish our respect and deference which we are to pay to these Antient Writers, for this is most certain that their Failings and Mistakes are nothing in comparison of those Excellent and Worthy Matters which their Writings are filled with. To conclude this Head, to recede from the Fathers is thought a Great Crime by many: and so indeed it is, if you mean it aright, that is, if we depart from the Antient Doctrines of Truth deliver'd by them, and preserved in their Writings. But it is not Criminal to depart from the Fathers when they do so from the Truth. Yea, this is to be practis'd by us, if we sincerely desire the Purchase of Truth, which is the thing I am Directing you to.

CHAP. VIII.

The next Impediment of Truth is Unruly Fancy. The Doctrine of JUDICIARY ASTROLOGY founded on mere Imaginary Hypotheses. Thence Astrological Predictions are disowned by the most Learned. Prognosticators perform not what they pretend to. Their Prognostications are condemn'd by themselves. The Doctrine of Genitures is arbitrary and groundless. Mr. Gadbury's Ingenuity, Civility, and Skill owned by the Author. Some other Particular Opinions shew'd to be the product of Imagination. Three Errors in the Church of ROME assign'd as the effect of Fanciful Rhetorick. Other Faults in Language and Phrase taken notice of. Errors among Papists and Protestants caus'd by Enthusiasm. Truth is simple and naked. Falshood gay and pompous. Close Reasoning preferable to Rhetorick. Affectation of Obscurities and Mysteries is an other Cause of Error. This shew'd in the Gnosticks, in the School-men and Casuists, in the Professors of the Spagyrick Art, in the Quakers, in the Allegorizers. The rise and progress of these last. False Teachers affect Obscurity. We are concern'd to study Simplicity and Plainness, as we desire the purchase of Truth. THE

7ly. **T**HE Next Cause of Error and Impediment of Truth is an *Indulging of an Unruly Fancy, and nourishing of Enthusiasm*, instead of a Solid Reasoning and Judging concerning things. It was well said of one of the Antients, * A Man's Soul is Indanger'd where there is too much Wit and Fancy, and but very little Judgment. For the former being once become Predominant and Rampant hurry the Mind into Wild Apprehensions of things, and by that means betrayeth it to Error and Falshood. Where this Unruly Faculty gets the Mastery and bears sway, it interrupts all Sober Reasoning, and so is necessarily the parent of Delusion and Gross Mistakes. Then Men are Affected towards Some Propositions and Doctrines as the Poet was towards † *Sabidius*, They Like not Such Notions, That they are sure of: they Hate such and such Doctrines, that they declare: but they cannot tell Why, they are not able to give an Account of their Averseness. It is no wonder that such Persons as These greedily imbrace Falshood. When they give way

* Κενδυνεύει η ανθρωπι ψυχη, δι ευνογίας τς φρονεως, τς κρισης απροσβ. Philo.

† Non amo te Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare:
Hoc tantum possum dicere, non amo te.

way to the Wild Freaks of Imagination, and indulge their Humour and Caprice, how can it be but that they should feed themselves with Chimeras and Illusions, and suck in all kinds of Erroneous Perswasions? The Conceptions and Issue of the Airy Imagination are Antick and Monstrous, as when *Ixion* coupled with an Empty Cloud the Offspring was no other than Mishapen *Centaur*s. It were easy here to point at some Opinions which had their Foundation only in Fancy. By the Agitation of This alone Men daily create Unheard of Notions, and by a Strange kind of Collision strike *New Lights* in Philosophy as well as Religion. *Plato* was one of These Fanciful Heads, who, though he banished all *Poets* out of his *Commonwealth*, yet was sufficiently Poetical and Fabulous himself. It seems he would suffer no Fictions but his Own, which produced Strange Conceits and Whimsies in his Writings. He may be rightly stiled a *Poetick Philosopher*, and he hath had several followers of the same Genius, who have suffer'd their Fancies to range at Pleasure, and truly they may be said to be Ingenious rather than Philosophical.

Here I might rank all those *Bold* and *Daring Adventures* in Sciences, and those pieces of *Knight-Errantry* in all Arts: which

which (if you would learn their Original) are the product of Ingenious Melancholy, and are the Steam which issues from the Brains of Hypochondraical Persons. And as in Most things some Melancholick Men make a Right Judgment and speak well, but only in One Particular thing they have Incongruous, Absurd and Monstrous Notions: so it is Here, they will Discourse Well of all matters but One. The Flaw is in One part of their Brain. Hence are Those Extravagant Fancies and Fegaries which we meet with in some Mens Writings of old and of late. And in my Opinion none impose upon the World more by their Exorbitant *Fancy* then those who defend *Judiciary Astrology*, and Foretelling of Events (even those that depend on the Wills of Men) by consulting the Stars. For though I acknowledge the Virtue and Power of the Heavenly Bodies, though I confess a possibility and probability of predicting several things, where the Free Will and Choice of Man are not particularly and palpably concerned, though I admire and venerate the Study of the Stars, and own *Astrology* to be a Choice part of Natural Philosophy, though I pay my respects to *Urania* and to the chiefest Writers in that Art, yet I find no ground to acknowledge the *Certainty of Prognostication*, and to approve

prove of *Judiciary Astrology* as a laudable Art and Science, and to be confided in. My reason is because the Professors of it are Men of *Fancy*, they proceed on *Feigned Principles*, on mere *Imaginary Suppositions*, such as the Distribution of the *Signs* of the *Zodiac*, the Order of their Division with respect to the *Parts of Humane Bodies*, the distinguishing them into *Four Trigons*, the parcelling out the Heavens into *Twelve Houses*, no more nor fewer, with the Particular *Properties* of them, the dividing the Artificial day and night into Twelve Equal parts which they stile the *Planetary Hours*, the Doctrine of *Genitures*, and the Rules and Maxims belonging to it, all which, together with some other *Hypotheses* that are the usual Basis of Astrological Judgment, are Fictitious, and bottom'd upon mere Imagination, and consequently the Offspring of them are Error and Mistakes, for which cause I make mention of them in this place; and I think my self the rather obliged to do so because I find that those very Persons who are best skill'd in the Astrologick Art, look upon the *Judiciary* part of it as a mere Fiction.

I am sorry it is my Lot in this Point to oppose so Eminent and Skillful an Artist as Mr. *Gadbury*, who hath declared to the World that the Art of foretelling future Events

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Events (even those which depend on the free arbitrement of Men *is acknowledg'd by all the Learned* : and he particularly instances in that Learned Knight Dr. Brown (in his *Religio Medici*,) and in the Worthy Dr. Gell, who was for Astrological Predictions, he saith, and in Dr. Goad (in his *Astrometeorologia*,) who falls short of the Learning of the other two, and is very *Canting* and *Enthusiastick* in his Writings, as any one can tell that knows what those Epithets mean, and hath read the Doctors Papers. He pretended to more than he understood or could do, as for Example when he saith, * *Comets may be predicted to a Month, yea a day.* But to wave these particular Persons and any reflections on them, I will end the Dispute between us thus, (and appeal to Mr. Gadbury himself whether the Prognostick part of Astrology *be acknowledg'd and allow'd of by all the Learned*, which is the thing which he maintains.) Regiomontanus, Kepler, Tycho Brahe, Galileus, Bullialdus, Hevelius, Gassendus, and a great number more that I could name were undoubtedly very Learned Men, and well skill'd in the Stars; and yet not one of them ever pretended to make a Judgment of future Events in States

* *Astrometeor.* Book. 3. Chap. 3. Pag. 458.

States and Kingdoms, from the Motions or aspects of those Heavenly Bodies, (I mean the known Planets of Heaven, and not Preternatural Luminaries, as Comets) which certainly they would not have omitted if they had entertain'd the least belief of the *Judiciary* part of that Art. But not to mention Foreigners, we have had, and have at present in our own Nation many Learned and Profess'd Students in Astrology: some of whom have writ of that Subject, and all of them are well skill'd in it: but there is not a Man of them lays claim to this thing which our *Almanack-Makers* and a few of their way talk so much of, and boast they are Masters of. Did Dr. *Bainbrig*, *Graves*, *Briggs*, *Ward*, *Wren*, and other Professors of Astronomy assert the Doctrine of Prognostication by the Stars? or have you found Dr. *Wallis*, Mr. *Newton*, Mr. *Flamsteed* undertaking any such thing? Whereupon I ask these following Questions, Did the former of these Men understand themselves, or no? Are the latter defective in the Study of this Art, or not? Was Mr. *Lilly* and Mr. *Booker*, are Mr. *Andrens*, Mr. *Sanderson*, or even Mr. *Gadbury* better vers'd in the Authors and Arguments in this Cause than of those Learned Professors I have named? Is there such an Excellent Art as Foreknowing and

and Foretelling by the position of the Stars all events of Man's Life, and have not these Persons found it out? Are they dull and blockish, but are the *other* sharp and sagacious? Or do these Men conceal their Art? Or are they so Envious and Malicious that they will not impart it to Mankind? No certainly: there is all the reason imaginable to believe that if they really knew any such thing, they would tell the World of it. It is an Argument therefore that they neither know nor believe any such thing, but on the contrary that they believe it to be a Fancy and Chimera: and because they do so, they seem to impose upon the World, and to cheat and delude the People. What really and truly belongs to the Art of *Medicine* is own'd by all Learned Men that study that Art: so in *Law*, and in all other *Arts* and *Professions* the Learned Men of them agree in the main Essentials of them. But here is an Art which a few Well-wishers to the *Mathematicks* Every Year present us with, but there is not one Learned Professor or Student in either University that concurs with them, or owns it to be an Art, or any part of it. The short is this, those Learned Men before named and many others besides understand this Art, or they do not: if you say *they do not*, then first they are not

not the Persons the Learned World takes them to be, *i. e.* Men of a very Consummate Knowledge: and secondly I would ask why should not they understand it (if it be an Art) as well as Mr. *Gadbury*? How came Mr. *Wing* and Mr. *Coleson* to know it better than Mr. *Flamstead* or Mr. *Newton*? If you say they do understand this Art, then what is the reason that they do not let us know any thing of Futurities from it? Is there any reason they should be false to their Art? There is none questionless; but the true reason why these Knowing and Inquisitive Persons pretend not to such an Art as *Prognosticating* is because they are assured that it is Vain and Groundless, and that it is built wholly on Imagination, and upon False and Airy Hypotheses; which is the thing I undertook to make good in the Close of my *Cometomania*, and therefore I refer the Reader thither for his Satisfaction in this Point.

And what I say is further evidenc'd from plain Matter of Fact, for we see that those Men who pretend to foretell by the Stars the Great and Remarkable things that shall happen, are not able to effect any such thing. Not a Word did any of them tell us before-hand of the *Great Frost* in 1683. There was nothing in the Heavens that foresignified the ex-

ceeding Warm Winter in 1685. And if they usually fail as to their presages about these Matters, can any considerate Man think that they are able to foretell futurities in Church and State, which hang on the arbitrary Will and Election of Man, which confront all the positions and configurations of the Heavens? None of these Gentlemen took any notice of any *Aspects* that signified the Death of a *Monarch* in February 1684, and yet we know who fell in that Month. There was not any Configuration in May, June or July 1685 to intimate the Rebellion in the *West*, and the Event of it. This, if we duly weigh it, is very convincing, it being grounded on Experience, which, saith Mr. Gadbury, is the *Astrologer's Oracle*, yea is nearly allied to *Infallibility*. We have had large Experiment of this, that none of the Yearly Prognosticators have foretel'd the Grand Occurrences which have lately happen'd. None of them saw it written in Celestial Characters (which they pretend to read very plainly) that the *Prince of Orange's Expedition* should be successful, nay none of them foresaw that there should be any such Attempt of his. Not a Man of them foretold from the Starry Influences (with which they are so intimately acquainted) the War of the *Confederate Princes* and *States* with *France*. But on the contrary many things which some have lately with

great confidence pretended to foretel, have proved arrant Falsities.

Nay, Truth will extort a Confession even from those that oppose it, and accordingly Mr. Gadbury himself (who merits to be named in the first place) acquiesces in this, that *No Man can be positive in foretelling future Events of the Stars.* And then in the same Papers he adds, *They cannot be foretold in Specie, but in genere only.* He complains that *Astrology is very darkly and obscurely understood,* and that *the greatest of our Knowledge in these Celestial Speculations is the least part of what we are ignorant.* And therefore he bemoans his fate in an other place, crying out that *he was Condemn'd by his Stars to the Study of Astrology,* acknowledging thereby that it is a Punishment, a Plague rather than an Art. And hear the Confession of this Condemned Man, *That part of it (saith he) which is known to us we too often apply to a wrong purpose, and by our Neglect, Hastie and Ignorance club to our own deceptions. We frequently cheat our selves, — and so bring Disparagement unto our selves and Art together.* And of late, since he hath no writ *Prognosticks,* (as in the Year 1691.) he calls them *Trifling Predictions,* and *Vain Pompous Presages,* and he is out of love with *Predictions,* he saith at the end of his Almanack. And in his Almanack for 1692.

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he calls these Prognosticators *Swinish Star-Prophets*. Thus Mr. Gaddbury is of our side now, he is a profess'd Enemy to *Judiciary Astrology*, though a while ago he was of an other Mind. Thus we have gain'd a Profelyte, and one worthy of our gaining. Others agree with Mr. Gaddbury to condemn this Imposture, as Mr. Wing in his Almanack for 1688. *It is certain, faith he, that never any Man living upon the earth could ever yet exactly obtain the true place and motion of the Celestial Bodies, much less prognosticate and judge of their Effects.* This is home to the purpose, and spoken like an honest and impartial son of *Urania*. Mr. Saunders (one of the most considerable Men of that way, next to Mr. Gaddbury) ingenuously confesses in his Almanack for 1686. that *the Judgments of Astrologers are Ridiculous Fopperies, Wild Conceits, for most part mere Forgeries and Fancies, Imaginations of fanciful Men, Dotages and Fictions of brain-sick Men, Predictions built on sandy Foundations, Sonorous Nothings.* The fiercest Adversary of Judiciary Astrology could not have said more. And therefore we are the more beholding to him, or rather to the Convictions he hath had, whereby it seems he hath been irresistibly perswaded that Astrological Predictions, relating to the arbitrary Actions of Men, are very

Airy and Fanciful, and that whilst the Authors of them are employed, *Mercury* is the Ascendent all along.

More especially the *Doctrines of Nativities* is to be look'd upon as a great Piece of bold Fancy, though I do not wholly deny that something may be guess'd sometimes concerning the Temper and Genius of a Person from his Nativity. But the Principle that Mr. *Gadbury* (who hath said, and can say more of this than any Man) lays down is this, that *Cardinal Signs* possessing all the Angles of a Nativity render the native famous and notable in his Generation. And he adds, that this is a truth conspicuous and undeniable not only in the Genitures of Men, but of Kingdoms, Cities, Castles. You know then that *Cardinal Signs* are *Aries*, *Cancer*, *Libra*, *Capricorn* (two of which, viz. *Aries* and *Libra* are also call'd *Equinoctial Signs*, and the other two *Solstitial* :) and *Angles* are the first House or Ascendant, the fourth, seventh and tenth Houses of Heaven : and a Planet posited in any of these is *Angular*. So that every Person according to him that hath any of these *Cardinal Signs* on any of these *Angles* certainly proves Famous and Notable in his Generation. Accordingly he produces ten *Nativities* to shew the virtue and energy of *Cardinal Signs* on the Angles of Geniture, and he hath since

since added the *Nativities* of many others. To prove that the *Cardinal Points* are very Influential on things here below, he acquaints us that *March-beer bears away the Bell because the Sun is then in the chiefest of the Cardinal Signs.* The Sun is in *Aries* then, and *Aries* governs the *Head*, thence the Drink that is brew'd under that Sign is *Intoxicating*, i. e. hath dominion over the *Noddle*. This is as good *Astrology* (I will undertake) as that. But he proceeds, *Good housewives find the Virtue of the Moon in the Cardinal Points as often as they bake and brew.* The prime seasons of the Year being under these, the *Moveable Feasts* of the Church depend on the *Vernal Equinox*, which is one grand *Cardinal Point*: the *Jewish Passover* and other Feasts among them were celebrated under those Signs: and (because you must take one thing with an other) *Christ was born and suffer'd under them*, as well as under *Pontius Pilate*. Then he comes with quotations out of *Ludovicus de regiis*, *Cardan*, *Dassipodius*, *Firmicus*, three of which (as I conceive) are nothing to the purpose, and have no relation to *Genitures*: the fourth is the bare opinion and observation of a Writer who could have produc'd Observations to the contrary if he had espous'd that side. Here is all the profound Arguing of this Gentleman (which I speak not

as if Mr. *Gadbury* could not argue and discourse better, for it is well known he can, but the Weakness of the Cause will not permit him to do otherwise,) besides this one Topick more, Many famous Persons were born under Cardinal Points of Heaven, *Ergo* these Points render them such. *Pindar* and *Archimedes*, *Homer* and *Demosthenes*, &c. had Cardinal Signs on the Angles of their Genitures: but these were famous Men, *Ergo* all famous Men have the like. Then according to this way of Reasoning none are Famous that have not those Signs, because these render Men such. But we could produce abundant Instances to the contrary. Yea, he confesses himself that *Plato* (who was as Famous as any, *Plato* the Prince of the *Academicks*, *Plato* the Great Soul of Philosophy) had none of those Signs on the Angles of his Nativity. *Gassendus* was a Famous Man (take it which way you will, for Mr. G. characterizeth him as Infamous in his Nativity) yet he was not much troubl'd with that sort of Signs in his Geniture. And he saith it is acknowledg'd by Astrologers that there are and may be Famous Men in the World who have not this Badge in their Birth. What reason then is there to believe that *Remarkable Virtue* of Cardinal Points in the Case of Genitures, which he so zealously contends for? Especially

pecially if we consider that the disposing of the *Heavens* into certain *Houses*, on which the *Angles* wholly depend, is altogether arbitrary and imaginary, and so the Hypothesis that is founded upon them falls to the Ground: and consequently there is no Basis for the *Genethliacal* part of Astrology, i. e. the passing judgment on *Nativities*.

Indeed I cannot but think that Mr. *Gadbury* himself (a Man of so much Ingenuity and Perspicacity as he is Master of) is partly of this Perswasion, though he is pleas'd upon some ground or other to take the part of the *Genethliaci*. For if he speaks true (and why should I not believe that he doth) when he saith *He hates fetters on his Understanding*, he cannot but apprehend that he is miserably *Shackled* as long as he maintains the Doctrine of *Genitures*. And he is to be applauded for those Words of his, *I do so abominate Falshood that I can, and frequently do fall at odds with my self when I discover an Error in my Judgment*. I hope this is his time of quarrelling and being at odds with himself: and therefore I am resolved I will not act that part towards him: especially when he speaks so like a Gentleman and a Christian, *I love* (saith he) *to keep within the Bounds of Modesty, and Good Language, and Good Manners*. And indeed

I can attest the Truth of this, for I receiv'd two or three *Letters* from him in a very Civil Stile, and I own him to be in them and in his *Reflections* on what I writ generally fair and obliging. But as for the Terms of Respect and Honour which he is pleas'd to heap upon me, I cannot pretend any claim to them, though I heartily thank him for his Good Opinion either of me or my endeavours. There are some things concerning *Gassendus*, *Mr. Lilly*, *Richard Cromwell*, *Major General Lambert*, &c. which I took notice of out of his *Collectio Geniturarum*, which he thinks I have misrepresented: but all that I can say is this, that I am sure I design'd not to pervert his Words or Meaning, but if the Dubiousness of them gave me occasion to mistake him, it is not my fault, and I hope he is so Ingenuous and Candid as not to impute it to me. I have since often enquired for that Book of his, but cannot find it, and therefore am not able to shew him either his or my own Mistakes. However, they are in a matter of no great Moment, and therefore we have neither of us cause to make any loud Complaints, and cry out of our being greatly injured. And I hope the Printer's or Transcriber's Fault who would put *Gustavus Adolphus* (the more Famous Man, and most heard of) for *Carolus Gustavus* will break no

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squares between us. Having waited a long time for an opportunity which I thought my Bookseller would have given me of inserting these and some other things into this or any other Book, I have now forgot some of the particulars, and I have purposely omitted others because they are of no importance, and ought not to beget any disquits between us if we be wise.

To conclude, I must acknowledge that Mr. *Gadbury* hath acquitted himself like a True Son and Volary of *Urania*, and hath generously defended his Post when it was very difficult to be held. He could have spoken more effectually in a better Cause: and therefore we must not blame him, but the Matter he unhappily light upon. Some of his Writings are a Proof that he can discourse well and to the purpose. His late *Lunary Table* shews him a Person of great Observation, and his *Ephemerides* were an undeniable demonstration of his Skill in the Heavenly Bodies: though not only his professed Foe (*J. P.*) but *R. S.* an other Philo-mathematick Brother (in his Almanack, 1691.) briskly corrects him for his Mistakes in that Noble Performance. But I am apt to think that he is envied by some of his Brethren because he hath outdone them, and is indeed too Worthy a Person to be ranked among the common herd of Almanack-writers. I find some

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Pens are very busy in making Reflections on his past and present Circumstances. But such Entertainments are no pleasure to the Ingenuous. As for the side or party which he seems to take, it is nothing to my present purpose. I shall perhaps look upon it as his Misfortune, rather than his Fault. I return him thanks for his Free Communication by Letters or otherways. I heartily wish him all the True Happiness which he wishes himself, and am glad of this Opportunity (though late) of telling him so.

The Reader is sensible, I doubt not, that though I have indulged somewhat of a Digression, yet I have kept to the Main Point, to shew the Predominancy of *Fancy* in some pretended Arts and Undertakings, whence it is that *Erroneous* Notions and Perswasions prevail too often among Men. This may be further (but more briefly) exemplified, for from this luxuriant Root sprang the wild Conceits in the *Turkish Alcoran*, and the *Jewish Talmud*. To this are owing the Inventions and Fables of the *Popish Legends*: hence are the Unaccountable Notions which the *Rosy Crucians*, the *Behmevists*, the *Family of Love*, and the Writers of *Allegorical* and *Mystical Divinity* afford us. And with these may be ranked a Late Author of the *Roman Communion*, Mr. Ar-

nauld,

nauld, whose *Treatise of the Sacrament and Defence of Transubstantiation* are an undeniable Proof of what I am speaking of, that *Wit and Fancy* pervert the *Truth*. Let any impartial Man examine his Discourse, and he will find that it is made up altogether of extraordinary Quaintness and Subtilty. He hath established a Notorious Falshood, meerly on the Witty and Fanciful Improving, or rather Perverting of One or Two Common Notions. That he might not go in the number of Ordinary Dull Souls, that he might be known to be an Excellent Wit (as certainly he is,) he lasheth out with an Ungovern'd Fancy, and thinks to make Truth truckle to Imagination. From this source we may derive his Conceit who dreams there is only *One single Article of Christian Faith* to be believ'd to make a Man a True Christian, and strives to make this good from the Writings of the Evangelists. From this Fountain springs the Ingenious Fiction about the *Deluge*, viz. that the *Waters* were shut up in an *Oval Crust or Shell of Earth*, and that by the *cracking of the Shell* the Flood was caused. And of the same rise is that Authors Hypothesis of a Sky without Clouds, of an Earth without Seas or large Rivers, without Hills and Vallies, without Metals, &c. Such Flights in Theology and Philosophy as these seem

seem to be somewhat akin to *Rennew's New Jerusalem*, and his *sailing under Water in Stone-Ships*. Nay, they may be thought to be of the same Product, though much Finer, with *Tryon's Art of Brewing*, and his Best way of *drying Mault in the Sun* in the Months of *April* and *May*. A late Writer, of a very exuberant Fancy, tells us that the *French King's Bombs* are meant by *the power given to scorch Men with Fire*, Rev. 16. 8. (though he might as well have said the *French* Insults upon *Spain* are more particularly meant here, for we read in this Verse that *the Vial was poured on the Sun*, which is the *King of Spains* particular Badge and Cognizance.) And there are many such Interpretations of the same fanciful breed, which I omit.

It may be Observ'd that this Petulant, this Roving and Skittish *Fancy* hath oftentimes vented it self in an Affected kind of *Rhetorick*, which also proves to be a Great Enemy to *Truth*. To make this good, I will Instance in the *Rhetorical Flights* of some Authors, which it is probable hath administred to several particular Errors. Thus the Doctrine of the *Pope's Supremacy* was promoted by too Fanciful *Rhetorick* at first, viz. by the Hyperbolical Elogies given *St. Peter* by some of the Fathers, as *Jerom, Chrysostom, Cyril, Cyprian*, and others; who

who spake as Orators are wont in their Panegyricks; especially *St. Chrysostom* was much addicted to High Strains and Fantastic Flashes, and affected a Plausible more than a Serious way of Speaking. But they were all of them Excessively Lavish in their Speeches concerning the Jurisdiction of the *Bishop of Rome*. They gave him too High Titles, and Complemented him in too Lofty a manner. What they said was taken for Reality and Solid Truth afterwards, and so the Error concerning the *Pope's* Supremacy was founded on Rhetorical Flourishes, and too Elevated a way of Haranguing in their Sermons and Writings at that time. Thus also *Invocation of Saints* was occasioned, and partly Maintain'd from the Rhetorical and High-flown Apostrophes of the Fathers to the Deceas'd Saints. The Pious and Devout Addresses of *St. Jerom* to the *Lady Paula*, of *Gregory Nazienzen* to his Sister *Gorgonia*, of *St. Austin* to his Mother *Monica* have been lookt upon as Praying to those Persons, and thence many have inferr'd that the Departed Saints are to be Implored. They mistook an Affectionate Figure in Rhetorick, whereby they made their Application to them, for a downright Invocation. So likewise those High and Towering Expressions used by some Fathers concerning the *Elements* in the Sacrament

of

of the *Lord's Supper* caus'd the Opinion of *Transubstantiation* to be receiv'd afterwards. They designed only to create Awe and Devotion, but the fruit was Error: for their Eloquent Strains and Rhetorical Figures pass'd for Plain, Serious and Downright Truth. Thus Three Grand Articles of the *Roman Faith* have been introduced by an unwary indulging of too Rapturous and Fanciful a way of Speaking. And among those who go under the name of *Protestants* (as well as *Papists*) some Errors have been foster'd by the same means. There is a sort of Deceivers who differ in their *Language* from other Men; they affect to Speak not like them. This is Observable in the Persons before named, the *Teutonic Philosopher* and his followers, the *Brethren of the Rosy-Cross*, the *Modern Allegorists*, and other late Innovators in Religion. These deal in Tropes and Figures, and are much taken with Metaphors, Similes and Allusions. They affect a Glorious kind of Phrase and Expression, though in the mean time the Sense be very Mean and Poor. These Fanciful Rhetoricians deceive with their Splendid Words, they disguise, yea confound the *Truth* with their Flourishing Stile.

But many Persons have not rested here: but with their *Fancy* and *Fantastick Phrase* have

have joyned *Enthusiasm*, which is Pretending to Divine Revelation, and an Immediate Converse with God. Such high fliers were some of the *Gnosticks* who brag'd of the knowledge of those things which * the Scripture was altogether silent about, but which were immediately reveal'd to them by God. And many such have been since. When their Fancies are exalted to a Pitch they perswaded themselves that some Extraordinary Spirit supplies them with constant Dictates and Discoveries: and whenever they are at a Loss, they are Helpt out by that Great Dictator, just as the Monk, when he was not able to go on with his Verse, but left a void space in it over night, had a Poetick Angel came, and fill'd it up by the next Morning. Fancy domineers, a Strong Imagination hath the Ascendent over these Men, and this they take for Inspiration and Immediate Revelation. These Persons are not for Arguing but Divining; Reason is discarded to make way for Afflation. And hence many a Rank Error hath been bred in the Church of Rome, where hath been a great number of Men and Women (even some of their Canonized Saints) who had a Large Dose of *Enthusiasm*. And hence Perni-

*A οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἐκείνη ἡ ἀποκάλυψις, ἀλλὰ ἡ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος.
 Theodor. in 1 Tim. 6.

Pernicious Doctrines have been broach'd by Seduced Men who have laid claim to *Protestantism*, as *Munier*, *David George*, *John of Leyden*, *Fifth-Monarchy Men*, *Quakers*, and others. Some of these have pretended to Interpret all things in Scripture by Immediate help of the Spirit, which hath occasion'd Great Delusions, and encourag'd Men to Propagate them. For the firm Perswasion that they were Divinely Illuminated made them with great Fervour and Confidence vent their Opinions, and shew'd a great deal of Anger towards all those that would not embrace them as Divine Discoveries. And this had as great an influence and effect on those they dealt with, for there is a great number of People that listen very attentively to pretences of Revelation, and are ready to receive any thing or Person that comes under that Notion. Alas! they do not take care to judge aright, and to inform themselves that this which they call *Inspiration* is only an overheated Imagination, an Unruly and Ungovernable Fancy, which is generally the product of an Unusual Fermentation of the Blood and Spirits, of a Distempered Brain, of a Diseased Spleen, of an ill Habit of Body. Hence come their Strange Motions, Raptures, Transports and Extasies, hence are those *Wrong Conceptions* and

Erroneous

Erroneous Impressions on their Minds, which will not suffer *Truth* to be entertained there.

Let that Man then who would be free from These be careful to keep himself from all Extravagant Heights and Irregular Exaltments of the Imagination. Let not Humour and Fancy pass with him for Truth. Distinguish between Solid Reason and the Flashes of Fancy, between Real Argument and Quaint Conceit. And let it be remembered that *Truth* is Simple and Naked, but *Falshood* Clothes it self in Several Shapes, and Disguises it self in Divers Colours. It must be made Gay and Pompous, to Deceive. Truth hath a Native Beauty which sets her off and commends her: but too much Adorning and Trimming her detracts from her Comeliness, yea sometimes leads her to the confines of Error. A Learned Father saith well, *As much as the Natural Beauty is better than That which is made only by Art, so far better is the Simple Decour of Truth than a Neat and Affected Dressing it up.* And he calls it afterwards *the Naked, but Radiant Beauty of Truth.* Those that content themselves with This are usually bless'd with the Purchase of Truth It self:

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* Theodoret. *Serm de Martyr.*

† Συμνην καὶ ἀποσιμβον τῆς ἀληθείας τὸ καλλόν. *Idem.*

but those Fanciful Men who Soar Higher are generally cheated with Lies and Falshoods. For it is well Observed of this Learned Father, * that it so happeneth that Things Themselves lie at the mercy of Orators. The Wording of things often Maketh them or Marreth them. Men are used to Judge of things according to the Force or Weakness of the Words which expresse them. For there are such Fools in the World as look chiefly to Words, but regard not the Nature of Things. Now it is impossible but such People as these should run themselves into Error. Wherefore if you are desirous not to do so, you must prie into the True Nature of Things Themselves. You must not affect to be tickled with Fine Language and Spruce Orations, you must not list your selves into the number of those Persons who are for St. *Austin's Litaney* (but Otherwise than He intended and understood it) a *Logicâ libera nos, Domine*. You must always suspect those Men who are against Close Reasoning and Arguing. Adopt not any Opinion because it pleaseth your *Fancy*. Remember that Logick and Rhetorick are two Distinct things, that Truth is oftentimes Lost by too much

Flourish.

* Πέφουκε πως κινδυνεύειν ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τῶν πραγμάτων ἡ δόξα. Idem in Orat. 8. de Providentia.

Flourishing of Words and Fond Indulging of the Imagination. How often are the Idle Amusements of the Mind obtruded for Truth? How frequently are these Dreams, these Phantoms, these Spectres, these Utopian Plots, these Legendary Conceits, these Wild Fictions and Fetches imbraced as Catholick Verities; witness the Writings of the Familists, the Behmenists, and the whole Tribe of Enthusiasts. But that you may be Prepared against the Suggestions of these Erroneous Spirits I have offer'd This to you, that you be careful to Correct the Extravagancy of your Imaginations. Captivate the Fanciful part of your Souls to their Understandings: attend to Sober and Severe Discourse, and always suspect those Opinions to be False which you are not able to give some Rational Account of. In brief, Scorn and Laugh at Those Castles in the Air, Those Doctrines and Propositions which have no other Bottom than an Airy Fancy, and are founded only by the subtile Artifice of a Daring Imagination.

8. An Other Great Cause of Error and Hindrance of Truth is a *Fond Affectation of Obscurities and Mysteries*. I ever look upon those Writings and Discourses as best which are most Intelligible, because they have the greatest tendency to *Truth*, which is a thing that is to be understood. Especially

cially in laying the foundations and principles of any Art there must be great care taken that all Ambiguous terms be avoided. Definitions more especially should be very plain, and in easy Words, such as are appropriated as it were to the thing whose Nature we are to describe. Logick as 'tis defined by the *Dutch Man*, [*Ars conficiens instrumenta*] one would think is a Definition of the Trade of a *Fiddle-maker*, or some other *Instrument-maker*, rather than of that *Noble Art of Reasoning and Arguing aright*. We should always be careful to use Plain and Proper Words when we are about to give an account of the particular and individual nature of things. But most especially in *Religion* this is to be observ'd; if we design *Truth* we must speak intelligibly and properly: however, let us not affect to amuse our selves and others with Obscure words or notions. The Contrary hath been the way of Hereticks and False Teachers: thus if any one would be acquainted with the *Mysterious Gibberish* of those Antient Hereticks the *Gnosticks*, or the Followers of *Valentinus*, let him consult the *First Book of Irenaeus against Heresies*. There he may at one view behold what Dark and Unintelligible, what Wild and Extravagant Stuff was vented for Divinity by Those Men. And, if you would know what was the Design of their

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Prodigious Fictions about their *Æones*, and the several *Conjugations* of them, and the like, you can imagine it to be no other than This, to deface the receiv'd Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, especially the Eternal and Ineffable Generation of the Son of God, to deprave the True Account of that Sacred Mystery, and to corrupt the Fundamental Points of Christianity. *Tertullian* saith of these *Valentinians*, * They make it their Business to *Hide and Cover* what they Preach, if They may be said to *Preach* who do so. Whilst they Utter'd their Heretical Doctrines they disguis'd them, they affected New Phrases, and Odd and Uncouth Expressions which were hardly Intelligible.

And This hath been a fault in many of the *Church of Rome*, the *Schoolmen* particularly, who have wrapt up their Notions in such Barbarous Terms that at once they almost Mischieve the Mouth that speak them, and Offend the Ears of those that hear them, and (which is the worst of all) Obscure and Debauch the Truth. This sort of Men delight to make things Intricate and Perplexed, and by their Blundering and Ill-contrived Notions to Indanger Divinity. For when Doctrines

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* Nihil magis curant quam Occultare quod prædicant, si tamen Prædicant q u Occultant. Adv. Valentin.

are Confused and Intricate, and come to be Immured in Dark Terms, there is Little Good to be expected. As *Aristotle* said of his *Physicks* (as *Anlus Gellius* relates,) or of his *Metaphysicks* (as *Plutarch* reports in the *Life of Alexander*) that they were * Publish'd in the World, and yet not Publish'd; So it may be said of These Mens Theology: when they Declare it to the World it is yet kept Close and Unpublished. You are no Nearer the Truth than you were before; nay, sometimes it happeneth that you are Further off. So the Voluminous *Casuits* among the Papists do seldom Satisfy, but they very often Puzzle Mens Consciences. The Confessor doth not Resolve but Intangle his Penitent. There are so many Heaps of Rules, and those Larded with so Many Limitations, that it is Difficult to know what they are to Believe or Act. Indeed it is hard to tell which is the Rule, and which is the Exception. Those that shape out these Rules and Directions are generally Men of very Perplex'd and Disturbed Brains. Whence a very Learned *Romanist* † tells us that he Wonders the Schoolmen and This sort of People could Sleep, because they Troubled their Heads in the Day
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* *Exsoluta et in exsoluta.*

† Ludovic. Vives de Causis Corrupt. Art.

time with such Crabbed and Uncouth Notions, such a numberless brood of Idle and Nice Distinctions, such a bundle of Useless Cases, so many Curious and Subtile Questions, such a company of Sapless Controversies, such a herd of Monstrous Problems.

Next to the Schoolmen I may reckon the *Patriarchs of the Spagyrick Art*, such as *Paracelsus* and *Helmont*; for even these Men are Writers of Divinity, and mix Scripture with their Philosophy. Some of my Readers, I doubt not, are acquainted with the Obscurities and Intricacies of those Mens Pens. They have given themselves perhaps a taste of their Unintelligible Jargon, and Refined Nonsense. As these *Alchymists* are wont to Dissolve Metals by Art, and to Extract thence their Quintessences, so they have a way too, it seems, to *Extract Notions*, and these are generally so *Fine* and *Volatile* that they escape our Apprehensions. All their Conceptions in Divinity are pure *Arcanums*. *Mystical Terms* and *Ambiguous Phrases* are their Delight. These Obscure *Dark Writers*, like the *Cuttle-Fish*, love to hide themselves in their own *Ink*. These *Sooty Chymists* speak as Darkly and Obscurely as if their Brains were infected with the Smoak of their Furnaces and Laboratories. They study to be *Confused*; they fill up their Books, as *Moses* began his, with a *Chaos*.

It is as hard for Us to find their Meaning, (saith the Honourable Mr. Boyle, who understood their way well enough) as it is for them to find their Elixir. If you ask the Reason of this Mystriousness, they will tell you that this is done on purpose that they may be Admired by their Readers, and that their Art may appear more Venerable. It seems they are content to expose themselves to the Contempt of the Learned and Wise, to purchase the Admiration of the Ignorant. Or, Others say it is to Conceal their Inestimable Knowledge from the *Vulgar*, for their Notions are too Precious to be Explain'd to such. Hence they use an Ambiguous and Ænigmatical way of Writing, that so they may not be Understood by any but the *Adepti*, and *Sons of Art*, as they call them. This they pretend is the Reason why, like Conjurers, they use Hard Words and why they all espouse that Celebrated Saying, * Where we speak Plain, we had as good as say Nothing.

And not only these Men but the Whole Enthusiastick Tribe (before named) of *Cabalists*, *Behmenists*, *Familists*, and *Quakers* affect a Mystical Language, and a Dark kind of Canting, though in the mean time they talk of New *Lights*, *Beamings*, *Shinings*,

* Ubi palam locuti sumus, ibi nihil diximus.

ings, and the like. To Instance only at present in that sort of Men who talk so much of a *Light within them*. I have Wondred sometimes when I have thought what Strange Work they have made with That single Expression. That serveth them at All Turns: that they make use of instead of Reason, and Argument, and Pertinent Quotation of Scripture, or any thing else which is serviceable to Convince Men. And yet all this while this Phrase, which they so much Affect and even Doat upon, is but a Metaphor, and a Similitude. For Light (properly speaking) belongs to Bodies; but Figuratively and by way of Allusion it is applied unto Spirits, *viz.* to God and to the Souls of Men, and also to the Virtues and Graces of the Soul. But still it is an Improper way of Speaking, and consequently is not so Fit to set forth a thing on which they lay so much Stress, and which ought to be utter'd in the most Plain and Intelligible way. But what do they mean by this Light within them? Surely they will in some of their Writings Explain to us what they Understand by it. Go to then, let us hear how they do it. They tell us that it is a *Divine Fire*, the *Birth of Christ*, the *Life of Christ*, the *Measure of Grace and Life*, the *Divine Air*, the *Spiritual Leaven*, the *Alarm* (so William Pen.) the *Vehicle* of

of God, the *Spiritual Body of Christ*, the *Celestial Light and Life*. If All these Names which are given it by their Writers do not sufficiently Explain it, then further they tell us Negatively, * that the Light or Spirit within is not the Proper Essence or Nature of God. Again, † the Divine Seed or Light within is not the Spirit or Divine Power, but is different from it, for the Spirit influenceth on Men by this Seed. But Positively they assert that || it is a Real Spiritual Substance, in contradistinction to an Accident. Moreover, (a) it is a distinct separate thing from Man's Soul and all the Faculties of it. Further, “(b) it is a Spiritual, Heavenly and Invisible Principle in which God, as Father, Son and Spirit, dwells; therefore call'd “*Vehiculum Dei*, or the Spiritual Body of “Christ, the Flesh and Blood of Christ “which came down from Heaven. Or, “if this doth not Edify, an Other adds “that (c) this Light is a Substance composed of Body and Spirit: and its Body is the Vehicle or Vessel of its Spirit, “which Spirit is a measure of the Spirit “or Soul of Christ the Heavenly Man. Again,

* Barclays Apology. pag. 94.

† George Keith's Way to the City of God.

|| Barclays Apol.

(a) Idem.

(b) Ibid. pag. 94, 95.

(c) George Keith's Way to the City of God.

Again, the same Person saith that * this Light is Inferior to God, and Superior to the Soul, of a Middle Nature between God and the Soul. From the Whole I can infer This, that *the Light within them is Darkness*, that whilst they talk of *Light*, they are Benighted about this very thing: and they leave Others in the same Condition, which directly makes them Obnoxious to Unreasonable and False Notions in Religion; for this is the Result of a Fantastick *Obscurity* of Words in Divinity.

But the *Allegorizers* are the most Shameful Corrupters of the Sacred Scriptures and all Theology by their Obscuring and Darkning them. Here I must premise that there is such a thing as *Mystical Divinity*, and that it is Laudable and Useful. For we see that many places of Scripture have a double Sense, and Mysteries lie hid in them. The Book of *Canticles* is useless in the Bible, unless we allow of this. The *Epistle* to the *Hebrews* is an Undeniable Argument of the Lawfulness and Advantage of Mystical Theology, where you may find the Legal Rites, Sacrifices, Tabernacle, Priestly Office, and most of the Mosaick Ceremonies Mystically interpreted, and applied to Christ. *Cyril*, the Learned Bishop of *Alexandria*, endeavours

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* Ibid.

to shew how the things which have happen'd in the Gospel-Dispensation were Preshignified by those that were in the former Darker Dispensations. Indeed this Father's Works are Chiefly spent in the Allegorical way, in shewing that the things we read of in the Old Testament were Types and Representations of what we meet with in the New: and several others of the *Fathers* present us with Symbolical as well as Literal Interpretations of Scripture. A Profound * Modern Divine of our own hath shew'd himself very Skillful in Interpreting Old Prophecies and Types, and his Writings admirably explain the Harmony between the Prophets and Evangelists, the Old and New Testament, whereby he hath excellently search'd out the Hidden and Mystical Sense of the Sacred Oracles. But there is a *Mystical Divinity* of an Other sort, which is Ridiculous as well as Pernicious. This had its Rise from the *Jewish Doctors*, who were the First *Allegorizers* on the Scripture. They began presently after the Return from *Babylon* to Play with the Bible. To be thought Acute Men, and to be Admir'd by the People they Coined New Senses of Scripture, and dealt in Allegorical Fictions. The *Pharisees* were the Next Favourers of Mystical Interpretations: they

* Dr. Jackson.

they minded not the Literal Sense, but delighted in Nice and Subtile Meanings, in Allusions and Fancies. And by the Example of the *Pharisees*, which was the most Considerable Sect among the Jews, Others of that Nation began to doat on Allegorical Comments, and to despise the Letter. *Philo* the Jew was so Forward this way that *Photius* * saith of him that the Allegorical way of Interpreting Scripture came first into the Church from his Example; but herein that Learned Writer was Mistaken. Afterwards, their *Talmud*, which hath many Dark and Intricate Conceits in it, and their *Cabala* which consists altogether of Mysteries and Abstrusities, were made up into a Compleat Body, and many of their *Midrashim* their Commentators have spent a great part of their time about these Night-Dreams and Dark Devices, and love to amuse and puzzle the World with them. Even among the *Infidels* this Obscure way of Theologizing hath not been unacceptable: the *Turks* have a sort of Priests and Students in their Law who are great *Allegorizers* of it; and *Averroes* (that Mahometan Philosopher) had set them an Example, who interprets the *Alcoran* in a Mystical and Moral way, and thereby makes it a tolerable Piece.

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* In Bibliotheca.

Among the *Christians* the *Gnosticks* (before mentioned) were Great Men for the Parabolical and Mystical Explication of passages of the Old Testament in so much that they thereby Evacuated the Letter. *Origen* imitated Them, and in all his Homilies Obscures the Text by fastning Allegorical Meanings on it. Some think the Study of *Platonick* Philosophy, which was Mysterial in divers things, inclined this Excellent Person to that Mystical way. Others think that He seeing the Scriptures despised by the *Pagans* for their Plainness and Simplicity, undertook to Please them with Figurative Meanings: he thought to Commend the Bible to them by that Sublime and Lofty manner of handling it. After this (though some say Before, but very falsely) a Spurious Piece * of Mystical Divinity appeared in Publick under the Name of *Dionysius* the *Areopagite*. And in Succeeding Ages there were ever some who were Enemies to the Dead Letter, as they call'd it, and turn'd the Scripture into Lively Allegories, and understood every thing in a Symbolical and Spiritual meaning. This way hath been approved of and practis'd by severall of the *Roman* Communion, by severall of their Canonized Saints, especially *St. Teresa* a *Spanish* Nun.

* De Mysticâ Theologiâ.

Nun. But the more lofty and divine it seems to be, the worse it is, for it deludes the more powerfully; it thrusts out the intelligible way of Truth, and at last Truth it self. The Men before mention'd have been found guilty in this Matter, I mean the *Rosy Crucians*, and *Chymists*, &c. and Enthusiasts of all ranks; These have more or less pleas'd themselves with Similitudes Numbers, Letters, Allusions, Comparisons, and any thing in Scripture whence they could most dexterously draw a Mysterious Sense. But you may Observe that this Way ever leadeth to some False Notion in Religion. Those who have been in Love with it have Allegorized away the Real Meaning of the Resurrection and Other Substantial Articles of the Creed. Though then there be Such a thing as Mystical Theology allow'd of by the Holy Scripture It self, and though it be Serviceable and Useful in Christianity, yet when it is made use of to Exclude the Plain and more Intelligible part of Divinity, and to Pervert the History of the Bible, especially of the New Testament, it is to be look'd upon as no other than the Handmaid to *Enthusiasm*, which I have shew'd you is a Great Advancer of Error.

Let us then be Warned concerning these Bold Allegorizers, and Others who bring
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in Error by affecting *Obscurity* in their *Stile* and *Phrase*. You cannot but take notice that there are Such in This Age; they leave the Plain Way of Christianity, and the Form of Sound Words by which it is expressed, and betake themselves to Ambiguous and Mystical Phrases. These Men read Lectures of the *Black Art* (if I may so say) to their Hearers. These Limners draw all their Pictures with too much *Shadow*; or rather, all their Pieces are *Night-Work*. There is nothing but *Terra Incognita* in all their *Maps* of Divinity. You must *not know* what they mean, but only Gues at it. Surely they purposely design to keep themselves from being Confuted by keeping themselves from being Understood. They are as Dark as the *Delphick Oracles*, which spake Hard Greek, but did not Construe it. Is it not Strange to see that some Mens Divinity is Riddles and Hieroglyphicks, and that they Prize themselves for their Cloudy and Canting Expressions? *Heraclitus* was call'd *αἰνιγματίας* because of the Obscurity of his *Stile* and *Matter*. This kind of Men deserve the very same Title, for they do in Divinity what he did in Philosophy, *i. e.* they affect groundless Mysteries and Abstrusities, and lap up their Notions in Unintelligible Words. This very thing is assigned

* Laert. in *Heraclito*.

signed by St. Peter as *One Mark of False and Erroneous Teachers*, 2 Ep. c. 2. v. 18. They have This Character given them there that [*they speak Great Swelling Words of Vanity.*] With a Tumid Stile they cheat the Simple, whilst they make them *Admire* them for their Big Words. These Men are call'd by the same Apostle [*Wells without Water,*] i. e. they pretend to Deep Knowledge, but are utterly Void of it. And they are said to be [*Clouds that are carried with a Tempest,*] or (as St. Jude expresses it) [*Clouds without Water, carried about of Winds,*] i. e. they pretend to High and Lofty Notions, but there is no *Truth, Substance* or *Weight* in them. Whilst this sort of Men are using a Religious Canting, they are pleas'd to give it a Specious Name, calling it *Seraphick Notion*: but we must not be put off with this, but remember that Error is frequently convey'd in Obscure Terms, and Falshood seeks for shelter in the Dark. False Teachers cast a Mist before Mens Eyes, to Amuse and Delude them. Such *Dark-Lantern* Divines we may justly fear have some strange Plots and Treasonable Conspiracies against Christianity.

Therefore here you are Concern'd to take Heed ; avoid those Men who study to be Obscure, and like no Divinity but in Masquerade. Let none perswade you
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that Nonsense and Raving are Sacred, and that *Bethlem-Hospital* is the best Divinity-School. That is a Good Rule which is given by a Late Ingenious Man, Receive nothing for *True* but what you *Evidently know* to be so: admit nothing for *Truth* but what presents it self *Clearly*, and *Distinctly* to your Judgments. He was, it seems, of *Rabbi Hillel's* Mind, and had read his Document, * *Dictate nothing for a Certain Verity but what you Clearly Understand, and can Make out.* For Truth is Plain and Perspicuous, but is Lost in Turnings and Mazes, in Windings and Labyrinths. Truth in it self is Easy to be known; and the Reason why so Few come to the knowledge of it is not because it is Absolutely Difficult, but because Men have Wilfully Obscured it. Truth, I say, is Plain and Obvious; more particularly the *Christian* Verities are so. Whence it is that they gain Profelytes in a marvelous manner, and prove Convictive without any Resistance. Thus when the Logical Heads were bandying of Arguments in the Council of *Nice*, an Old Simple Man (who had been a Confessor in the foregoing Persecution under *Dioeletian*) stept in; and struck a Philosopher Dumb

* Ne dicas aliquid quod non Perspicue intelligatur. Cap. Patr.

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Dumb at first, and then made him Confess the Christian Truth, and openly Profess that he believ'd it. How did this Lay-Man effect this? The Ecclesiastical * Historians relate that he did it by the *Simplicity* of his *Language*, and by propounding and urging the Truth in *Plain Words*. If then Plain Words carry Conviction along with them, it is folly to use Canting, and to affect Obscurity. *Darkness* which, was one of the *Plagues* of *Egypt*, is as Great a one when it befalls *Divinity*. It spoils and confounds all Sound Notions, it introduces the most damnable Errors, and makes way for Eternal Night and Darkness. I will shut up this Head with that of the *Pious* Moralist, † *The Discourse which really aimeth at Truth must be in a Simple Plain and Unaffected Style*. For this is the Usual Vehicle of Truth: whereas on the contrary, *Error* and *Falseness* are imposed upon us under dark and obscure Words. We may ever suspect that for Sickly and Unsound Divinity which is so Muffled up, and keeps within doors, and is always Curtain'd and kept in the dark.

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CHAP.

* Socrates. l. i. c. 5. Sczomen. l. i. c. 17.

† Quæ Veritati operam dat Oratio, Incomposita debet esse & Simplex. Senec. Epist. 40.

CHAP. IX.

An other great Cause of Error is a Love of Disputing and Quarelling. This proved from 2 Tim. 2. 16. and other places. The Arians of old, and the Socinians of late are profess'd Wranglers. These batter by Quirks and Criticisms destroy the Faith. Papists are great Sophisters. So are Quakers. The Vanity and Folly, together with the Mischief, of Willful Brawlings and Disputings. The next Hindrance of Truth is Mens running into Extremes. Truth, as well as Virtue, is seated in the Middle. A particular Instance of Extremes in Natural Philosophy: and the Medium between them assigned. Several Examples of it relating to Religion, in the Primitive Times. Other Examples since the Reformation. Antinomianism briefly decipher'd. Caused by running from one Extreme to another. Some other Perswasions shew'd to have the same Rise. In the same Persons and about the same Things there are sometimes Extremes. The Suffrage of Theodoret and Nazianzen. Two Reasons why Men are wont to lash out into Extremes. The Middle way is to be follow'd by those that are desirous to find Truth.

THE Next Manifest Cause of Error and Hindrance of Truth in Religion is *Nice and Fruitless Disputes, and a Love of Quarrelling.* It is true there is oftentimes Some Advantage gain'd to Truth by the Contests and Quarrels about Religious Matters. That Saying in the *Talmud* is verified, *By Disceptation and Disputing the Truth is brought to Light, as fire is produced by the striking of the Steel on the Flint.* Truth may be the product of a Sober and well-ordered Dispute. Discoveries are made (I deny not) by a prudent and calm Debate. But then we know that there are Needleless and Fruitless Disputations, and such as tend to nothing but strife and contention. There is a sort of Men whose Trade and Work it is to raise Controversies: and these Men study not to clear but to make Difficulties, and to start Objections. Many strive like those two Rival *Limners* of Old, who shall draw the *finest and subtilest Lines.* They are for splitting a Hair, for cutting of Cumin-seed, for making a great stir about an inconsiderable matter. There are those among us who aggravate and heighten Differences; and when they have this in hand, they make use of any Arguments (if I may call them Arguments,) be they never so frivolous and trifling, never so

weak and incoherent, Inever so childish and impertinent. Pitiful Cavils and Poor Pretences will then serve their turn. The Professed Disputer is glad to catch at Shadows and mere Appearances, he seeks Knots in Bull-rushes, he trifles away his time in coining of Nice and Groundless, but Puzzling Distinctions. He Glorieth in Noise and Words, in Clamour and Contest. This is he that may be said to Dispute in the *School of Tyrannus*, for never any one sway'd a Scepter more Imperiously than he doth a Syllogisin. And what are the Designs of these Doughty Disputants? The Main one without doubt is to shew their Parts and Wit, to let us see they have a Gift of Speaking, * which they can use any ways; to Verify what a Great Orator said long ago, † that there is nothing so Incredible but may be managed after such a rate by Discourse that it shall seem Probable. They have hereby an Opportunity to shew that they have an Ability to Discourse on Any Head, to Raise Questions, and to baffle them when they please, to Improve and Husband a Controversy, and to have the Last Word. Or, if they be Writers, they have an Opportunity to try who can *squirt Ink farthest*

* *Prorsa & Versa facundia.* Apul.

† *Nihil est tam Incredible quod non dicendo fiat Probabile.* M. Tull. in *Proxam.* Paradox,

theft (as a Comedian hath lately express'd it in an other sort of Combatants,) and who shall hold out at that Work longest. These Gladiators, these Masters of Fence combate only to shew what Skill they have at their Weapon: They must discover their deep Insight into Arts and Sciences, and shew their Reading and Scholarship. *Erasmus* in one of his *Epistles* speaking concerning the Times wherein *Constantine the Great* lived, and referring to the Quarrels and Squabbles between the Arians and Orthodox Christians, telleth us that * it was then a matter of Subtilty to be a Christian, it was only a Trial of Skill, and a Battle of Wit. Religion was judg'd by Wrangling, and he that Disputed most was the Best Christian. And the same folly hath much more prevail'd Since: Men dispute, and look after Victory, and not Truth; and then it is no wonder the Truth is lost. But what saith the Excellent Greek Moralist? † It is not only a Brave thing to know how to Overcome, but to be Overcome, when the Victory cannot be had but with Great Damage, for there is a Victory which is Destructive and Fatal to the Conquerors them-

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* Illis temporibus Ingeniosa res fuit esse Christianum.

† Οὐ γὰρ τὸ νικᾶν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ἡττᾶσθαι καλόν, ἐν οἷς τὸ νικᾶν, βλαβερόν. ἐστὶ γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ νίκη. Καθ' ἡμέα. Plutarch. περὶ παιδ. ἀγωγ.

themselves. Such without doubt is that where *Truth* is Vanquished. Therefore it was well said by * One of the Antient Writers of the Church, it is better to be Conquered Well than to Overcome Ill. And yet this is the extreme folly of some Men (the Men that I am now speaking of,) they strive for Conquest, though they lose Truth. Their design is to keep up a Party, and Maintain the Cause they have espoused. They resolve therefore that they will not be Convinced : and accordingly they desire Victory by Evil Means, and they will not stick to use Any Forces against their Adversaries. How Unmanly and how Unchristian a thing is this ? It is Shameful and Ignominious ; and were not Persons Strangely perverted, they would Blush at the Thoughts of any such thing. If they did sincerely seek after Truth, and were cordial Lovers of it they would take an Other Course, and they would with great Care and Industry avoid all Peevish and Perverse Wrangling, as knowing that Truth and that seldom go together.

And this the Apostle intimateth to us in 2 Tim. 2. 16. *Shun* (saith he) *prophane and vain Babblings, for they will increase unto more Ungodliness* (i. e. Ungodly and

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* Καλῶς κρατῆσαι κρείον ἢ νικᾶν κακῶς. Greg. Naz.

Erroneous Opinions as is clear from the Words which immediately insue) *their Word will eat as doth a Canker, of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the Truth have Erred,* and the Apostle assigneth there their *Particular Error*. These False Teachers whose Names he here sets down Seduced and Perverted the People by their Janglings and Disputes : and thence St. Paul takes occasion to Caution Timothy and other Christians against this way of promoting Error and Heresy. He bids them *Shun these Babbings,* and again, *ver. 23. Foolish and Unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes.* This is that which the Apostle began his first Epistle to Timothy with, *Give not heed to fables and endless Genealogies, which minister Questions,* ver. 4. whether by these he understands the *Fabulous Pedegrees of Angels,* which the Gnosticks call'd *Æones,* and much troubled their Heads about, or whether by *Fables* he understands the Legendary Stories of the Sanctity of some *Pharisaical Jews,* and the Romantick Tales of the *Messias's* days that were to come, and by *Genealogies* the Pedegrees whereby they proved themselves *Jews, Priests or Levites,* and so had a right to Priviledges proper to a Jew (as Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks,) or whether the Apostle means any thing else which they busied their Brains about

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in those days, and thereby fed their inbred desire of Disputing, and Controverting, and raising of Questions. The Apostle is against this, as a thing very pernicious in Religion. And this very thing he mentions again in 1 Tim. 6. 4. giving us there a Character of a New-fangled Teacher. *He is Proud* (saith he) *knowing nothing* (although that kind of Men think they know all things,) *but doating about Questions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmisings, Perverse Disputings of Men of Corrupt Minds, and destitute of the Truth.* They Doat, or rather, as the * Greek Word ought to be rendred, they are Sick about Fond Questions and Verbal Controversies. This *Sickness*, it is probable, is Opposed here to † *Wholesom Words, Healthful and Sound doctrines* spoken of in the verse foregoing. If you would attain to these, you must quit that Sickly and Unsound kind of Divinity which the Wrangling part of Christians are taken with. Willful and Malitious Jangling spoils all Right Notions. These *παραδιδασκαλίας* *perverse disputings* argue *corrupt Minds*, debauched Understandings, These Men *Know nothing*; so the Apostle peremptorily pronounceth of them in that forenamed place: and in the 20th ver. of that

* Νοσῶν.

† Ὑγιαίνοντες λόγοι.

that Chapter, *Vain Babbling* and *Science* *falsely so call'd* are joyn'd together. The one makes way for the other, and it hath been Observed that the most Wrangling Heads have been the soonest betray'd to Falshood and Error in Religion.

Besides the Example of those False Teachers and Seducers which St. Paul spoke of, I will present you with some Other Particular Instances. Gregory Nazianzen * upbraids the Apostate Julian with his Captious and Quaint Sophistry: he tells him of his † *Enthymems* and other *Syllogisms* which he brag'd he had so Subtilly contrived that it was impossible to Evade them. The Ecclesiastical Historian acquaints us that *Arius*, that Arch-Heretic, was noted for his *Disputing* Faculty, || he was Sophistical and Captious, he had skill to Intangle and Circumvent, And as this Crafty Impostour set up his Heresy by this means, so his Followers Upheld it by the same. Accordingly the Worthy Father whom I last named imputeth it as a Great Fault to the *Arians*, that they * Angrily Disputed about Syl-
lables,

* Orat. 4. contr. Julian.

† Λόγους σοφιστικῆς, τῆς αἰνέκτους συλλογισμῶν καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμήματων, &c. Ibid.

|| Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ἁμοιβῶν τῆς διαλεκτικῆς λέγει. Sociat. Eccles. Hist. l. i. c. 5.

* Τὰς συλλαβαῖς συτταράνουν, καὶ προσπλάτουν αὐτῶν, καὶ μικρολογεῖν περὶ τὰ γράμματα. Greg. Naz. Orat. 44.

lables, and wrangled about mere Words, and contended about such Little things as Letters. *Epiphanius* and *Theodoret* observe concerning *Aetius*, a great friend of *Arius*, that he was famous for his *Logical Subtleties*, and the former of those Writers (*heres. 76.*) hath left us a particular account of his *Sophisms* which he made use of. This you may satisfy your selves in that there was scarcely any Great Heretick and Seducer but he was a Shrewd and Tough Disputant, and used to wield a Syllogism with a Marvelous Dexterity and Cunning. The *Socinians* in these Latter Times, who are but *Arians Revived*, use the like way and method. Any one that hath perused their Writings knoweth what a deal of *Sophistry* they use. They have an innumerable company of Shifts and Evasions, of Windings and Turnings, of Quirks and Fallacies: and all along you may observe how strangely they Shuffle. Many of them, like their first Founder, have been well skill'd in the subtile way of Syllogizing, and disputing artificially: they know how to amuse Men by perplex'd and intricate Reasonings, by cunning and captious Arguings. Their greatest skill lies in Evading: they choose to escape and fly rather than conquer. This makes them venture on bold

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Interpretations of Scripture, this makes them strain the text of the Bible to maintain their own Hypothesis. Who sees not that they pervert the sense of Words against all reason and usage, and neglect the design and scope of the places of Scripture which they quote? Certainly never Men made such ill use of *Grammar* and *Criticism* as these do, for they make use of them only to deprave the true sense of the Holy Writ. To avoid and put by the force of some plain and express places how do they stickle, how do they tug? To *Lexicons*, *Dictionaries* and *Glossaries* they resort, and enquire into and pick up all possible senses of the Words and Phrases, which they meet with in Scripture, but what are most agreeable to the matter and scope of the places they are concern'd in. If a Word hath any other meaning in any Author whatsoever, they make this a sufficient Warrant to depart from the true and genuine Sense of the place. It is endless to particularize here: I refer the Reader to the Excellent Bishop *Pearson*, who all along in his *Exposition of the Creed* layes open the Vain Glosses and Sophisticate Reasonings of these Men, and shews the invalidity of their Interpretations. And we may find in the late *Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, chap. 8. writ by the most Accomplish'd
Bishop

Bishop of Worcester an amassment of Sundry Places of Scripture with the wild Interpretations of them which are assign'd by the *Socinians*. And lastly, when they can't evade a Text by their utmost art in expounding it, they pretend that some word or other in it is not to be found in the *Antient Copies*, though they have no Authority to vouch it.

Thus they will catch at any thing, they will say any thing to make their Cause good. And when they have put you off with the poorest and slenderest, with the weakest and feeblest Proofs imaginable, they will hold you in hand that they are very Strong and Convincing. Yet they go on, and gain Profelytes, and *Socinianism* is become a very fashionable Sect, for by *Socinianism* I do not only mean a denying of the Divinity of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, but I comprehend in it all the Errors about Christ's Incarnation and his Design of Coming into the World, and his Satisfaction, and the Doctrine of Justification, and several Other Great Mysteries and Sacred Verities of the Gospel. It is Wonderful to see how *Socinus* and his Party enervate these Evangelical Truths by False and Corrupt Reasonings, by Nice Distinctions, by Artificial Cavils, and Plausible Objections. They destroy the Faith of the Christian Church by Curious
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and Perplexed Controversies, by Cunning and Sophistical Arguings, by Smart Replies and Reparties : and they Prize themselves much upon this Talent of theirs. But herein they shew as Little Judgment and Wisdom as before, for this Gift which they Value themselves so much upon is no Considerable Excellency. We see in Beasts, * that those that are *Weakest in the Course*, are yet *Nimblest in the Turn*, which is the difference between the Hare and the Grayhound. So in Men we must distinguish between Ability or Strength of Arguing and Subtile Evasions. These latter are no sign of True and Solid Wit, no more than Quick Reparties are ; for very Ordinary, but Warm brains will make Sudden Retorts with some grace, but are not able to stand the Shock.

And the *Papists* as well as the *Socinians* delight in Wrangling and Cavilling, in Arguings and Ergotisms. In this those two Parties Agree, however in other things they Dissent from one another, and Many a Religious Truth have they Perverted by this means. The *Schoolmen* especially have advanced most Palpable Errors by their Sophisms and Shifts, by their Evasions and Subterfuges. How hath the Simplicity of the Gospel been corrupted, how hath the Purity of the Chri-

* Lord Bacons Essay of Discourse.

Christian Faith been adulterated by their Quirks and Subtilties? What a heap of vain and impertinent Questions, and as vain and impertinent Answers hath been introduced by *Scholastical Divinity*? How many hundreds of idle and useless Distinctions hath it furnish'd the World with? What a great Noise have their Disputes made to little purpose? What poor Entertainment is there for Rational Minds in all their Barbarisms and Subtilties? What pitiful and sorry Reasons do they build most of their Celebrated Doctrines upon? Observe it, they will give *Reasons* for any thing, as is manifest from *Aquinas's Account of the Reasonableness of instituting the various Ceremonies of the Mass*: and several such *Rationals* we have given us by the *School-Doctors*. But the *Roman* Disputants never shew themselves more Illogical and destitute of Reason than when they encounter the *Protestant Churches*. Indeed the Arguments which they use against the Reformed Religion are generally so Weak and Invalid that One Strong Argument may be drawn from them all to prove *Their Religion Unreasonable and Unlawful*, and *Ours* the quite contrary. I might in the next Place shew you how *Disputing* and *Love of Quarrelling* have bred no Mean and Contemptible Errors in the *Predestinarian* Controversies,

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versies, and the Points which border upon it: whilst Men have been so deafned with the excessive noise of these Janglings that they could not hear the Voice of Scripture speaking to them. But I will not Particularise here; it shall suffice at present only to have Caution'd you against running into Error and Mistakes by a Quarrellsome Genius.

I could here say something of the Sophistry of those Men who Discourse so much of a *Light within them*. One may plainly perceive in the Best of their Writings that they Force and Strain many Points, whereas Truth is Easy, and floweth Freely and Unconstrainedly. What Work do these People make to Prove that *Light within them*? Every Chapter almost in the Bible is pressed to serve them. They miserably Wrest and Distort the Scriptures for this purpose. The Whole *119th Psalm* speaks of that *Light*, say they, under the Terms of God's *Word, Law, Commandment, &c.* A Great part of the Book of *Proverbs* treats of that *Light*, they tell us: for by *Wisdom* is meant that *Light* of theirs. It were endless to relate how they Fetch in all manner of Texts to maintain their Groundless Error. They have the confidence to defend their *Silent Meetings* by alledging, *Psal. 62.1. My Soul silent is unto God, and*

Job 2. 13. Job and his friends sat down upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and spake not a word, and Rev. 8. 1. There was silence in Heaven half an hour. They might have gone to Hell too for an Argument, for that is express'd by *silence*, *Psalm 115. 17.* They might have an other in the Gospel, where we read of a *Dumb Devil*. And how Absurdly and Childishly do they Wrest those Places of Scripture [*Salute no Man by the way*] and [*God is no Respector of Persons*] to prove that no Signs of Civil Respect and Honour are to be us'd towards any? These Quiblers would argue also from that Text [*Call no Man Master*] that That Title is not to be given to any Man in Civil Converse and Discourse (though of Late 'tis true Many of them have chang'd their Judgment and Practise as to that.) Such groundless Inferences as these they make from Scripture, it being their trifling way, their whiffling Genius to catch at Words and Syllables in the Bible, and to argue thence impertinently: as if a Man should infer thus, *Job wish'd his Words might be * Printed in a Book*, therefore *Printing* was found out in those days. After the same rate are this foolish People wont to argue from mere *words* and the *sound* of them. This is the trade driven with

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* Job 19. 23.

Scripture by those who have no real esteem of these Holy Writings, and accordingly care not how they deal with them: whereas they ought to be manly in their reasonings from these Inspired Books, and to make deductions from them with great solidity and seriousness. Christ and the Apostles, say they, took no Texts to preach upon; wherefore no Minister must preach upon a Text. The Gift of Tongues is ceas'd, therefore Greek and Latin are to be laid aside. The Apostles were not University-Men, and bred up in the Schools, therefore farewell all Academick Learning. Here's their true quintessence of Reasoning and Arguing: this is the Quakers Logic. And I could shew you in several Other Particulars that they are as Profess'd Sophisters as any that ever opposed the Orthodox Faith. They affect idle Cavils and Subtilties, they Dodge and Wheel about, and you know not where to have them: they endeavour to say what they Can, but not what they Ought in any Point you discourse with them about.

Thus I have shew'd you that those who are most Averse to Truth are most Disputative and Fallacious. Error is Brawling, and Gains unspeakably by Contests and Bickerings. For Men by their Controversies and Tossings raise such a Dust that 'tis hard to Discern Truth. Their Eyes are

almost put out by it. Yea, such a *Thick Dust* is sometimes rais'd that *Truth* is *Buried and Lost* in it. If you would then purchase *Truth*, refrain from *Quarrelling*, check the *Cavilling Spirit*, restrain the *Itch of Disputing*. Spend not your *Time* and *Labour* in such *Vain and Fruitless Enterprises*. For it is evident that Men *Take Pains for Error*, they *Sweat for Falshood*. It is a *Long Compass* they fetch, and it must be brought about with great *Art and Industry*. But whereas the *Wise Man* saith, *in all Labour there is Profit*, *This* is an *Exception* from those Words, for there is no *Profit* accrues to those who *Labour* in this kind. These *Sophistical Disputations* (saith *Luther*, * who used to express his mind in a *Familiar way*) resemble a *Man whetting an Ax*, who continually *Whetteth and Whetteth*, and yet never *Cutteth* any thing therewith. They *Sharpen their Weapons*, but do no good *Execution* with them. They talk loud, but *Effect nothing*. What are most of the *Controversies* but *Solemn Trifles*, *Serious Fooleries*, *Laborious Vanities*? Who sees not that *Disputing Men* attend generally to the *Sound of Words* more than to the *Sense and Meaning* of the *Persons* they grapple with? And how is it possible then that *Truth* should be the re-

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* Colloq. Mensal.

fult of such Digladiations? It was truly said of an Ingenious * Observer of Mens Actions and Behaviour in the World, "that
 " they create Oppositions which are not,
 " and put them into New Terms so fixed
 " as whereas the Meaning ought to go-
 " vern the Term, the Term in effect go-
 " verneth the Meaning. How common a thing is it to make the Adversary say any thing, *i. e.* to make him in their thoughts say whatever they think they can most easily oppose? They do not set the thing they discourse of in a true Light, that they may have a right and full view of it: they are not careful to represent it fairly, but rather are enclined to mistake one another. Hence it is that they find a great many things in one an other which were never asserted by any of them. Sometimes the Words and Phrases and the manner of Expression are the chief cause of the quarrel. The Combatants agree, and yet think they do not because they use not the same Terms. They hold the same things, but express them not alike, and hence they keep up the quarrel, and will not let the Business be decided. Now, after this rate there is no hopes of Mens lighting upon *Truth* in the way of a *Set Dispute*: for whilst they attend not to the true meaning of Words, and whilst they

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* Bacon's Essays.

misrepresent one another, there's no likelihood of succeeding. As this is no lawful and fair way of dealing, & for I am sure 'tis not the way to Truth. Besides, where there is continual Disputing and Many Words, Men often forget both what themselves have asserted, and what their Adversaries have Ho. In the Heat of Dispute the True State of the Question is lost, and they run at Rovers, and keep up Wrangling for Wranglings sake. Or, sometimes they run so far before they are Aware that they are Forced to assert what they Would not, that they may not go back from what they have already said. Thus when *Ruffinus* lays to *Jerom's* charge often that he defends one thing now, and an other afterwards, that Learned Father gives this Answer, that this is the way used among *Disputants*; they are forced (saith he) * to Say what they Think not, because Necessity oftentimes drives them to it, and the Dispute engages them to Hold such a thing against their Minds. I might shew you likewise under this Head of my Discourse that Disputing and Jangling are the usual Passage to *Scepticism*, and therefore on that account they are Enemies to Truth. *Epicurus* was first

a Scep-

* Interdum coguntur loqui non quod sentiunt, sed quod necesse est dicunt. Apol. adv. Ruffin.

a Sceptick, and admir'd the Conversation of Pyrrho, saith Gassendus: From Scepticism Men run into Atheism and Sensuality. Disputes enervate Practical Religion. Love of Controversies eats out the heart of True Virtue. And at the same time it stabbs Truth to the heart, it is destructive of Sound and Right Notions, and nourishes Erroneous and False Opinions. Let us look Back and remember that the Quarrellsom Spirit of the Late Times brought us to that Multiplicity of Errors and Sects which we experienced among us. This Mischief of Disputes made so Strong Impression upon the Mind of an Excellent Person of this Nation, that he order'd This and This only to be ingraven on his Tomb-stone, *Here lieth the Author of this Sentence, Disputandi pruritus Ecclesie Scabies*, i. e. Busy Disputes end in the Infection and Corruption of the Church. He went out of the World with a deep Sense of This, and we that Survive him in it may by this Time be sensible what great Reason that Worthy Man had to fix that Aphorism on his Tomb. The Not-observing of this will certainly hasten the Churches Funerals, and then That Sentence may deservedly be its Epitaph. Let us Prevent this by being Wiser for the future, let us Dispute less, and Practise more. Let us be of Mild and Gentle Tem-

pers, of Quiet and Peaceable Minds. Let us endeavour to Compose Quarrels, and to Allay the Animosities of Men. Let us come to a *Right Understanding* of one another, which is the Great Help to *Truth*: let us not willfully Mistake one another, as 'tis the General Fashion of Men to do. Let us consider one another's Failings and Defects, and Compassionate one another on that Account. In many things we are All of us Short, and Shallow: we know but in part, and our Notions at best are but Lame and Imperfect. Why should any Man think that he hath *Monopoliz'd* Knowledge, and why should not he quietly and meekly hear *Others* Discourse? Oh when shall we *Freely* and *Ingenuously* impart our Notices to one another, and not run presently into Angry Disputes and spiteful Quarrels? Let us lay aside our Uncharitable Polemicks, and shun all Idle and Useless Controversies in Religion. Let us not foster Erroneous Opinions by our Nice Bandyng of Points. In a word, let us remember a Proverb of our Neighbours, * *By too much Arguing Truth is lost*: and let us not venture to hazard the Loss of it by our Immoderate Arguings and Debates.

I proceed to an Other Cause of Error, which is This, *Men fly out into Extremes*, and

* Par trop debatre la verite se perd.

and will not keep the *Medium* where Truth is seated; and thence it is that they are plunged into Mistakes and Fallhoods. You must know then that *Truth*, as well as *Virtue*, hath a Middle Station. Concerning the latter, *viz.* *Virtue*, the Opinion of *Aristotle* is generally received, that it is a Middle thing inclosed on both sides with Two Extremes. There is a Pair of Vices for One Single Virtue. And so the Inspired Scripture of Truth represents it, *Deut.* 5. 32. *You shall observe to do as the Lord your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the Right hand or to the Left.* And again, *Deut.* 12. 32. *Observe every thing I command you: neither Add to it, nor Diminish from it, i. e. offend not on Either side.* Which is the same with the Wise Man's Advice, *Prov.* 4. 27. *Turn not to the Right hand nor to the Left, remove thy foot from Evil.* Virtue or Goodness is the Center: keep Close to that, stir not from it to One side or Other of the spacious Circumference. And this very Notion is intimated to us in those Words of the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, 30 chap. 21 ver. *Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying, This is the way (the Direct way,) walk ye in it, when ye turn (i. e. when ye are inclined and tempted to turn) to the Right hand or to the Left.* Godliness is a Mean betwixt Two Extremes. And

* *Philo*

* Philo the Jew expresseth this well, "The
 " Mind must not only follow God without
 " Weariness and with the greatest Intention,
 " but it must tread in the Right Path, nei-
 " ther declining to the Right hand or the
 " Left. And the Rabinical Sentence quo-
 " ted in the *Capitula Petrum* is to the same
 purpose, † the Right way is the Middle
 way. And as I began with *Aristotle* when
 I offer'd this Notion to you, so I will end
 with his Words which are a Confirmation
 and Explication of it, || *Εὐθείᾳ δὲ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον
 τῶν ἐκτρέφει τὸ ἀνθρώπου.* The meaning of which
 short Saying is This, Good Men go on in
 One Simple Direct way, and decline not
 from it: but Evil Men have Several ways
 of deviating from what is Right. They
 are drawn here and there, distracted with
 Divers Lusts: and when they once leave
 the Middle and Right way, they are
 tempted even to Contrary Extremes. Which
 the Poet expresses in a Plain manner thus,
Dum vitant stulti vitia, in Contraria currunt.
 Fond Minds, whilst one Extreme they shun
 Into a Contrary as fast do run. [would shun,

And as it is thus in *Practise*, so it is
 likewise in *Opinion* and *Doctrine*. As it is
 with

* De Migratione Abrahami.

† יְשׁוּעָה דְּלֵךְ מִסְעָרָה

‡ Ad Nicom. l. 2. c. 5.

with *Virtue* so it is with *Truth*; it hath *Extremes* on both hands, but its Own Path is exactly seated between both. And as Men are apt to run into the *Extremes of Vice*, so they are inclinable to run into those of Error and Fallhood. This might be seen among the *Philosophers of Old*, as when the *Epicurean* held all is by *Chance*, and excused God from the Government of the World, the *Stoick* came and maintain'd that All things, even the Greatest Villanies, are by an Absolute Necessity. In Natural Philosophy there were and are the like *Extremes*, as might easily be shew'd, but I will content my self with one Instance only. Of old there were some *Philosophers* that attributed *Rationality* to *Brutes*: the *Pythagoreans* generally were of this Opinion: and *Plutarch* and some others have endeavour'd to shew how Accountable it was; but none hath said so much or spoken so wittily in defence of it as * *Porphry*. It is certain this was an high *Extreme*: but behold, how some have endeavour'd to baffle it by an other. They are so far from holding *Brutes* to have *Reason*, that they will not allow them to be endued with any *Sense*, nay indeed not with *Life*, for *Life* and *Sensation* go together. *Cartes*, *Gassendus*, *Willis* declare those *Animals* to be mere

* De Abstinent.

Machins or *Automata*. Matter and Motion, Pores and Particles, and the Adapting of one to the other do all; but Matter hath no Sensation or Vitality, all their Motion and Action are from without, and depend on Objects. Nay, this Mechanism extends not only to Brutes, but to Men, that is, as to all Operations but *Cogitation*. This is the result of an extreme Opposing the other Opinion of Brutes being Rational. And this *Extreme* is as *Erroneous* and *False* as the other, and is attended with as many ill Consequences. The Piercing Minds of those Great Men could not but perceive that there is a great difference between a single Operation in some part of the body (as the Brain's elaborating of Spirits, the Hearts making of blood, the Stomach's concocting, &c.) and that vast Multiplicity of Operations (and those exceeding different and heterogeneous) which accompanies the *Generation* or *Formation* of the Whole; and yet they hold that All is the Work of *Mechanism*: the Formation of the Brute is Mechanical, as well as its Actions after it is form'd. But then it is plain according to this Principle that the *Formation* of a *Man* may be so too, and it is confess'd there was no Soul to actuate the Matter, and therefore a *Man* (as well as a *Beast*) is of Mechanick Original. The shaping and forming of all his

his parts have no higher Principle than Mechanick Motion. I ask then, Why is *Man's Structure* accounted an Argument of God's Existence, Power and Wisdom, and that by some *Cartesians*, who allow the Formation of Man to be from a Divine and Supernatural Cause, and endeavour to prove it? If the *Brutish Embryo* springs mechanically out of the Seed, why not the *Humane*? I see no reason of Difference. And how this will gratify the *Atheists*, who think the Production of Mankind and all other Animals is alike, and is not owing to a Divine Principle, may be easily conceiv'd. Again, why may not Humane Bodies be merely Mechanical in all their Motions and Actions after Formation as well as Brutes? There is no reason against it, for if they can perform all Feats and exert all Functions of themselves, why should we attribute them to the *Soul*? And so by this means the *Soul* is excluded, or rather hence is proved that there is no Soul in Man distinct from his Body. Thus *Des Cartes* and his followers, whilst they strip Brutes of all Sense, deprive Man also of Reason and a Rational Soul.

But there is a *Medium* between these *Extremes* that I have named, and it is this, that Brute Creatures have *Souls*, such as they are, viz. Sensitive ones. Whether they

they are annihilated at the Death of these Animals, or yet remain, is not known to us; and that should not trouble us. But this we are sure of that it is not in the power of *Matter* to do what Brutes do; their Actions can not be performed by mere *Mechanism*: especially *Matter* cannot produce the great Work of *Generation* and *Formation*. An Organized Body exceeds the Laws of Mechanical Affections. Therefore we must conclude that they have a Principle that is more than Material; though they have no Reason or Will properly so call'd, yet they have some shadow of them, they have a sort of Inferior Souls, such as God thought good to bestow upon them. Here then I propound this as the true account of the Classes of *Spiritual* or *Immaterial Beings*, viz. GOD, the highest; then *Angels* Good and Bad, next *Mens Souls*, then *those of Brutes*. These last have not Reason, because they are Spirits of a lower rank: but they are not wholly Material and Automatical, because their actions surmount the power of *Matter*. This is the true Medium between the foremention'd Extremes.

But I will dismiss all Instances which are of an inferior Nature, and betake my self to such as are of an higher Rank: and here I will confine my self to the *Church*, and shew you that one great

source

source of Error in Religion hath been Mens flying out into one Extreme Opinion, that they might avoid an other. I will begin with some Examples of Elder Times. The *Gnosticks*, a perverse sort of Hereticks, falsely held that our Saviour suffer'd in the Fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*, and in the Thirtieth Year of his Age. * *Irenæus* undertaking to baffle them, whereas they fell Short, ran too High, and asserted that Christ lived very near Fifty Years, and consequently could not suffer Death when he was Thirty Years of Age. Again, These Hereticks had been Lewd and Wanton, extreme Loose and Voluptuous, giving way to Intemperance and Luxury, and maintaining these as Lawful and Allowable. In the same Age the *Encratita* (of whom *Tatianus*, a Philosopher converted to Christianity, was the Founder) arose, who imbraced an Other Extreme, and forbad eating Flesh and drinking Wine as unlawful. So difficult is it to keep a Mien. This may be seen in the Antient Dispute between *Stephen* Bishop of *Rome*, and *Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*; the one would have none, the other would have all that were baptized by *Hereticks* to be baptized again, which occasion'd a great Division between the *Roman* and *African* Churches.

But

* Adv. hæres. l. 2. c. 39.

But the Truth is they were both faulty, and there was a Middle way which should have been chosen by them: that is, if the essence or substance of Baptism was observ'd by those that administred that Ordinance, though they were Hereticks, then there was no need of Rebaptizing. But if there was a failing as to the Substance, and if the Form and Way of Baptism was not good and lawful, as suppose they baptized without owning the *Trinity*, then the Administration was invalid, and it was not to be look'd upon as Lawful Baptism. This is the Middle Way that was taken by the famous Council of *Nice*, the first of that Name, which though it determined that the *Cathari* should be received into the Church without being rebaptized, yet it determined otherwise concerning the *Paulianists*, who were a sort of *Arians* or *Antitrinitarians*. These the Fathers of the Synod order'd to be baptized again before their admission into the Church, because their Baptism was null on the account of the Form which respected the Doctrine of the Trinity.

To proceed, *Nestorius* Patriarch of *Constantinople* held there were Two distinct *Persons* as well as Two *Natures*, in Christ after his Incarnation. *Eutyches* (one of the Monastick Order) his Opponent, to avoid the Doctrine of *Nestorius*, ran upon an

an Other Extreme, Confounding the Natures, and holding that the Humane Nature was Swallowed up of the Divine, yea, that it was Changed into the Divine Nature, and Ceased to be Humane. *Dioscorus* and *Theodorus* (both of the Episcopal Order,) one of *Alexandria*, the other of *Damascus*) promoted and augmented this Notion: and even *Cyrl* sometimes, when he strikes at *Nestorianism*, seems to pass to the other opposite side of *Eutychianism*, viz. that there was only One Nature in Christ, resulting as it were from the mixture and confusion of the Humane and Divine Nature. Both these Extremes are avoided by the *Athanasian Creed*, where we profess that *Christ is One, not by Confusion of Substance, but by Unity of Person*. *Vigilantius* in Spain opposed *Invocation of Saints*, then newly got up, but did not enough consult the Honour due to *Saints*. *Jerom* on the other hand was too Extravagant, and to defend *Invocation of Saints*, and to confute *Vigilantius*, said some things which the *Papists* scarce hold at this day. Who knoweth not that the same *Jerom* and other Fathers, whilst they disputed against such as Disparage *Virginity* and a *Single Life*, did at the same time Extol them too highly, and even Vilified, if not Condemned Lawful Matrimony? Some Old Christians were such

Enemies to Idolatry and Worshipping of *Images* that in their Discourses and Disputes with their Adversaries about that Point they declared against the Civil as well as the Religious use of Images. Some Fathers forbid the very Making of all Images whatsoever, and even remonstrated against the Art of Painting and Limning. Thus particularly *Tertullian* condemns all kind of Painting and Pourtraying, though it hath no reference to Religion. *Irenaeus* and *Epiphanius* inveigh against Pictures, and *Clemens Alexandrianus* alloweth of no kind of Painting or Carving. And this they did to Oppose all Image and Picture Worship: which was an Honest Design, but unwarily betrayed them into an Other Extreme. I might Instance also in a passage which happen'd between *Tertullian* and *Marcion*. This latter was a Notorious Heretick, and defended the Doctrine of *Epicurus*, that God is wholly Unconcern'd with things here below, and takes no notice of Mundane Affairs. Whereupon the Other Person disputing against him, and being Resolved to Oppose him, maintain'd that * God is so Concerned with the things that are done here, that he is Subject to the same Passions which Men are, and more especially to the Affection or Moti-

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* *Cont. Marcion.* . l. c. 16.

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on of *Anger*, though (to do the Father right) he saith it is a Rational Affection, and not Vicious, as it is in Us frequently. *Helvidius* under *Theodosius* the Elder, about the middle of the fourth Century, and from him the *Helvidians* or *Antimarites* denied the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed *Mary*. On the other side presently arose the *Collyridiani*, who not only maintain'd that she continued a *Virgin* all her Life, but paid an Undue Respect to her, offering to her daily a Cake * (from whence they took their Name) as a Religious Oblation and Divine Honour. I could instance also in the Doctrine of the Sacred *Trinity*, and shew you how *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Gregory Nyssen* and some other Fathers, to run counter to, or rather (to speak more favourably of them) to obviate the Objections and Arguments of the Cunning *Arians*, who were their Antagonists, oftentimes run themselves into Great Absurdities, and fall into Extremes which are almost as Dangerous as those which they labour to avoid.

Pelagius, as perverse a Heretick as any have named, had a very Mean Opinion of *Baptism*, and asserted that Infants might be very Safe without it. To contradict this Opinion *St. Augustin* ran into an Other Extreme, and declared that there

is an *Absolute Necessity* of *Baptism*, and that all Children Unbaptized are Damned. The Fathers of the first three Centuries, as *Clement of Alexandria*, *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, &c. immoderately extoll'd and magnified Man's Will, and ascribed all to it; seldom or never speaking of the assistance of Grace and Spiritual Help to perform Holy Actions. Whereupon comes *Manes* and opposes this Error with a contrary one, for he and his followers wholly destroy'd the Liberty of the Will, and held that all Actions of Men are Necessitated, and that Man is evil by Nature on the Account of that Violent and Fatal Necessity which attends him, whereby he is compell'd to Sin. *St. Chrysostom* set himself to oppose these *Manichees*, and was unhappily carried too far on the other hand, viz. the Extreme before mention'd: he in some places diminishes the Virtue of Divine Grace, and attributes too much to the Natural Power of Man. But *Pelagius* ran further, and to avoid the *Manicheans*, exalted Man's Will and Power to a greater height than ever before, excessively magnifying the Natural Faculty of Reason, and vilifying the Divine Grace, and even denying the necessity of it, and holding Man's Free Will to be sufficient to all Spiritual Good.

St. Augustin saw this, and attempted

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rectify it by drawing a middle Line between these two Extremes, as * One expresses it, which (as he adds) he oftentimes perform'd with a steady hand, but sometimes faulter'd. This latter is too true, for I could make it appear that this Holy Man, who opposed that Vile Doctrine of *Pelagius*, was not Altogether free from holding an Extreme on the Other hand. *Beza* makes This Remark † that *St. Augustin* flies out sometimes beyond his due bounds, whilst he is Earnest in defending the Truth against the *Pelagians*. And truly if we consider that That Worthy Person had to do with Hereticks of quite Contrary Opinions, as the *Manichean Fatalists* and the *Pelagian Free-Willers*, we may well Excuse his failings and lapses, and imagin how that he Combating with both at a time, might unawares and by mistake Give Ground to either. And as that Learned Father grappling with those Hereticks, so *St. Chrysostom* endeavouring to baffle the *Anthropomorphites* is somewhat guilty of pressing the matter too far, and maintaining a Contrary Error. So much for Instances of *Elder Times*.

In the next place I will let you see that the Same Source of Error hath been Continued

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* Dr. Jackson Vol. 3. Book 10.

† Omnino extra metas excurrit alicubi Augustinus descendens adversus Pelagianos veritatis studio abruptus. la cap. 3. Johan.

tinued in Succeeding Ages : I will Instance at present only in the Times since the *Reformation* of Religion. Some *Papist* Writers had in many things made a false report of *Ecclesiastical* Affairs : whereupon the *Centuriators* rise up and confute them, and in that they do very well ; but (to speak impartially) they contradict them in some things wherein they are in the right : out of good will and zeal to the Reformed Cause they run too far. But this is to be said that they are not so blameable as the other side, for it is an Offence on the right hand that they are guilty of. This we may observe that One Cause of Error hath been Mens adhering to Opinions which they saw were Opposite to *Popery*, although, notwithstanding that Opposition, they were False and Unsound. As for Example, the *Papists* hold that Christ is Mediatour only according to his Humane Nature. *Me-lanchton* and *Calvin* with some others, that they might Confront the Opinion of the *Papists*, held that Christ is Mediatour according to his Divine Nature only. Whereas neither the One nor the Other is True, but the Middle Opinion is to be embraced, *i. e.* that Christ's Actions and Passions in way of a Mediatour in his *Humane Nature* receive their Worth and Efficacy from the Dignity of his *Divine Na-*

ture,

ture, or the Personal Union of both. And St. *Augustin* undoubtedly was in the Right when he said (in his Homily *de Oribus*) *Divina Humanitas & Humana Divinitas Mediatrix est*, i. e. Christ is Mediatour both in respect of his Divinity and Humanity. And I could shew you that not only *Calvin* but some Other Foreign Reformers were drawn into some Unsafe, as well as Novel Tenents, merely by their endeavouring to flie from the *Popish* Doctrines and Perswasions. This hath been the Great Cause of the Numerous Swarms of Errors, Sects, and Wild Opinions which have troubled the Reformed Churches. Hence have we been alarm'd with the pernicious Doctrines of *Anabaptists*, *Famili- lists*, *Libertines*, and *Enthusiasts*. These Men observ'd that such and such Tenents were maintain'd by the *Church of Rome* (which they justly were Enemies to,) and hereupon they fondly took up the *Contrary Tenents*, although they were False and Groundless. They really thought that if they Contradicted the Papists, and held Otherwise than they did, they could not miss of Truth. But alas this hath proved one great Advancement of Error among those that have pretended to the *Protestant Religion*.

Let me offer to you some Particulars (for you must give me leave to be very

Free with you, for that is one way to discover Truth.) The Men of the Church of *Rome* are chiefly for an Outward Worship, Pomp and Splendour, External Ceremonies and Bodily Gestures, in so much that the Inward Life of Devotion is generally Excluded. Others, to Oppose this, vilify External and Bodily Worship, Gestures and Postures of Reverence, and must have the Worship of God wholly Inward and Spiritual, which is an Extreme on the Other side. So likewise some *Papists* approach too near the *Pelagians* of old, who extoll'd Free Will so far as to debase, if not exclude, the Divine Power and Assistance. On the Contrary, there are Others who make Man a Stock or a Stone, rob him of his Intelligent Nature, and will not allow him to be a Voluntary Agent, or acknowledge that his Actions are properly his own. The *Romanists* assert that Faith is seated in the *UNDERSTANDING* only, and is bare Assent: but *Ameſius* and some Others, who disapprove of this Opinion (as being willing to depart from the *Papists* as far as they could) hold that That Grace is seated in the *Will* only, and not in the Understanding: whereas he that will speak Truth impartially must affirm its residence to be both in the Understanding and Will. The Men of the Church

of *Rome* assert that there is no *Assurance*, but that Christians are always in a Doubting Condition : whereupon the foresaid Author and some others (to oppose this Doctrine of the Papists) carry the matter too far on the other side, and hold that *Assurance* is part of *Saving Faith*. *Papists* ascribe too much to *Good Works*, and count them Meritorious : others run as far on the Other side, counting them not so much as Necessary Conditions of Salvation. *Papists* are for Enslaving the Understanding and Cramping Mens Minds, and shutting out all Extraordinary Light and Discoveries ; others on the contrary pretend to live upon Immediate Illuminations and Inspirations. *Papists* number no less than *Seven Sacraments* : but then comes the *Quaker* who lustily Opposeth them, and will not own any Sacraments at all. The *Papists* shew themselves Superstitious in Over-reverencing the *Lord's Supper* : there are great Numbers on the other hand who Irreverently despise and neglect that Holy Sacrament, and all the Arguments we can make use of will not dissuade them from it. The *Papists* contend that the very bare use of the *Sacraments* confers Grace : the *Saciniens* on the other hand maintain that nothing at all is conferr'd upon us in the celebration of those Sacred Rites. So the *Papists* coin too many,

ny, the Socinians assign too few *Articles of Faith*. Those of the Roman Church observe Holy Days and Festivals with too much Formality and Ceremony: others will take no notice of any Solemn Seasons, yea, they count it Superstitious to observe the First Day of the Week, All days being Alike with them. Thus most of the Modern Sects and Wild Opinions proceed from an Extreme Opposing of *Papery*. Whilst they vigorously shew their Antipathy against this, they imbrace Errors of a quite Contrary Nature. They Mean well in running from *Rome*, but they do ill in running so Far that they are out of Sight of *Truth*. This indeed is the Spiritual Drunkenness and Intoxication which accompanies Error: they reel from one side to an other, and can't keep the Middle way.

And this I take to be one of the true sources of the Prevailing Error of *Antinomianism*, of which I desire to speak somewhat more largely than of the other Particulars before mention'd, and the rather because it is so growing an Opinion at this Day. *John Isebius Agricola*, a German, * was the first Author and Maintainer of this Doctrine, in the Year of our Lord 1538. which he openly recanted upon *Luthers* dealing with him; but af-

* Sleidan. Hist. lib. 12.

ter *Luther's* Death he return'd to that Way again, the sum of which (as *Luther* in several parts of his Writings hath inform'd us) was this, that Justification doth not suppose Faith, but precedes it, that the use of the Moral Law is vacated as to true Believers, that the Grace of the Gospel is to be extended to all manner of Sinners that can confidently perswade themselves that Christ is theirs, and their Sins are pardon'd. This Sect which began in *Germany*, spread it self into other parts; and *England* (among the rest) hath bred those who have maintain'd the same Opinions that the *German Antinomians* broach'd, and have added others to them. Some among us have defended such Assertions as these, that Justification hath nothing to do with Faith, that the Moral Law is not obligatory to the Regenerate, and therefore the Preaching of it is useless, that the promise of Pardon, Justification and Glory appertains to Sinners, as such, not as Penitent, or Believing; that there may be Saving Faith without Regeneration, *i. e.* a Change of the Will and Manners; that neither Faith nor Good Works are necessary in order to Salvation, and that there are no *Conditions* in the Gospel-Dispensation. That the greatest Sins can do them no harm, and the best Duties and Graces can do them no good: that

that God is not displeas'd with the Persons of Believers for their Sins and Mifcarriages. They urge this, that Christ hath done all for us, he being our Substitute and Delegate, and consequently we are exempted from doing any thing. There is no necessity of believing and repenting, that we may obtain Mercy and Pardon. There is no Obligation on any Man to do any Religious Duty or Acts of Obedience, in order to his having the benefit of Christ's Sufferings. Gratitude obliges him to observe the Rules of Moral Righteousness, but he is not engaged to it by the Moral Law it self, for that Law ceases to oblige under the Gospel. Some of them tell us further, that not only the Punishment and Guilt of Sin, but the Pollution of it is laid on Christ, so that he is not only *imputatively* but *inherently* a Sinner. Thus the Author of those Papers intituled *Christ made Sin* endeavours to make our Saviour *a wicked Sinner indeed*. He will have the Spotless Lamb of God to be nothing but *One Spot*, really defiled and polluted with Sin. And as for Personal Holiness, he is pleas'd to call it a *Sham-Righteousness*. This is very strange Language, and I hope is not spoken by many of that Party. As to the Main Body of Antinomianism, I am charitably inclin'd to believe that the generality of those that espouse

spouse it design no ill, yea that they mean well, though they overshoot themselves. Their Doctrine is (to say no worse of it) a running out of one *Extreme* into an other. Whilst they are flying from *Rome* in the Point of Good Works and Merits, they fall into Errors of a different, but as pernicious a Nature. The *Papists* decry Faith, and excessively magnify Good Works, even as Meritorious, and therefore lay all their stress on these: the *Antinomians* on the contrary sally out into an other Extreme, and cry up Faith, yea an Empty Faith (consisting only in *Perswasion*) as the only thing necessary, but they pronounce Good Works to be needless. These, they say, are so far from meriting Salvation, that they are not requisite to it. The *Papists* make Christianity a Mercenary thing, depending altogether on our doings and performances: to oppose whom the *Antinomians* cry out against Obedience to the Moral Law, and say it is ceas'd under Christianity. *Papists* extol Good Works and their own Righteousness too high: therefore the *Antinomians* think they are obliged to depress and debase them as much as they can: they make it their Business * to disparage, condemn and vilify Personal Faith and Holiness, and † to discountenance all Graces,
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* Crisp. Vol. 1. Sermon 9.

† Vol. 2. Sermon 6.

Virtues and Duties. In short, the *Papists* ascribe too much to Good Works, therefore these Men will let them have no place in Christianity, they will not allow them to be *Conditions* of Life and Salvation, for there are no *Conditions*, they say, in the *New Covenant*. But from our Saviours Words, *Mark* 1. 15. we may gather that the *Conditions* on our part are *Faith and Repentance*. But when we call them *Conditions* we mean not that they have any thing of the Nature of a Meritorious or Impulsive Cause, but only that which is consider'd as an Instrument of Means in order to the obtaining Life and Happiness, or that without which we cannot obtain them. The *design* perhaps of these Persons may be good, *viz.* to exalt Christ and his Merits, and to debase themselves and all they can do; but the Rise of their Error seems to be this, *viz.* their Zeal to abandon the Popish Doctrines concerning Justification and Good Works: this makes them outrun themselves, and the Truth together. I am willing to resolve their falling into this that they unwarily plunge themselves into one Extreme whilst they are shunning an other, and know not how to observe a Mediocrity: a fault that many of other Perswasions (as I have shew'd) have been guilty of. The only way is to come back into the Middle Path, and there
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to reside : and I hope in time these Persons will do so. For I am perswaded that many of them betake themselves to this Extreme out of a very innocent Principle, that is a mere Opposition to an other Extreme which they apprehend (and that rightly) to be very destructive to Christianity.

I might refer to this Head of my Discourse some other Perswasions and Sentiments. Thus a * Worthy Writer seems to be too Melancholick in his scanning of *Events and Occurrences in the World* ; an † other flights and disregards them as much : the former sometimes finds *Prodigies* where there are none, the latter discovers them not, or neglects them where they are. The one shews himself too timorous and credulous, the other too bold and insensible. These are two blameable Extremes. So I conceive the Disputes between those Learned ‡ Writers concerning *the Operation of the Spirit on the Minds of the Faithful* are of this sort : one seems to averr that it is a Physical act, the other saith it is merely Moral. The former is too high, the latter too low. So in the Case of *Usury*, some draw their

* Dr. Jackson, of the Signs of the Times, and in other places of his Works.

† Dr. Spencer, of Prodigies.

‡ Dr. Owen and Dr. Claget.

their Pens against it in General, condemning all the kinds and degrees of it, others on the contrary declare them all to be lawful: whereas there is a *Medium* to be kept between these Extremes. Again, some restrain Religion too much to *Reason*, as the *Socinian* and *Deists*; these Men magnify Reason above its worth, whilst they make it the Standard of all Articles of Faith, and by this one Principle conduct themselves wholly in Religion. On the other hand, there are those that affect a contrary way, and utterly decry Reason in Religion, as all Enthusiasts and Fanatical Spirits. These have such low thoughts of it that they seldom make use of it, especially they are observ'd to exclude it from all matters of Faith, and they will by no means allow the use and exercise of it in Religion, no not in Christianity which is stiled a *Reasonable Service*. But an unbiass'd and unprejudiced Person may see that *Truth* lies in the *Middle* between both these, for though Reason hath been abused in Affairs of Religion, yet the lawful and sober use of it is not to be rejected. Some make the *Three Persons* in the Sacred *Trinity* three distinct Divine Beings or *Minds*: others tell us they are only Three distinct *Modes* of Subsisting. The one looks like *Tritheism*, the other is *Sabellianism*. Both which are

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Extremes, and from thence we may discern what is *Truth*. Take an other Instance, some have confined themselves wholly to a *Literal* Sense of the Holy Scriptures, and press that too far in some places, to the great prejudice of *Truth*. An other sort of Men comes, and lays aside the *Literal* Meaning of the Bible; and the *History* is despised, and the *Letter* laught at: nothing is thought of but the *Spiritual* and *Mystical* Sense. This is as Great an Extreme on the one hand, as the former was on the other. So we read that some of old too Highly extolled the *Translation* of the Old Testament by the *Seventy*. To contradict these Men, *Jerom* as Immoderately and Furiously inveighed against that Translation, and Cried up the *Hebrew* Text. And these *Extreme Opinions* have been Lately espoused by some Learned Men, with no small disparagement to Religion, and to that which is the Great Charter of it and of all Divine Truth. And I could shew you in sundry Other Instances that Men, in their Theological Enquiries, and in matters that appertain to Religion, do not so much strive to Hit the Mark (to fix upon the Truth) as to Overshoot one an other, and to fally out into Distant Extremes. They do not love to come to a Poize, to make a Ballance: they are not for ob-

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erving a just Medium between the Extremes, but by a strange *Elastick* faculty which they have, are wont to fly out beyond all due bounds and measures.

I might shew you also that even in the *Same Persons* and about the *Same Things* there are *Extremes* sometimes. Thus the *Papists*, who after too High a manner Extol the *Fathers* and Antient Writers, are the Men who most of all Slight and Disregard them: when they have a mind to it, they neglect Antiquity and the Testimony of the First Writers of the Church, who frequently are Substantial Witnesses against them and their Doctrine. And have you not Read that some *Anabaptists* and *Enthusiastick* Sectaries, who have doated on Allegories and Mysteries, and were deadly Enemies to the Letter, yet have run into this Extreme themselves, and have Absurdly interpreted Those places of Scripture in a Literal Sense which were designed to be understood in an other, and none else? Hence they have Preach'd upon House-tops, Wash'd one an others Feet, Left all Things, and the like. These Men shew that they are Antipodes to themselves, and are possess'd with such a Spirit as you read of in the Evangelical Story, which cast the poor Wretches *sometimes into the Fire and sometimes into the Water*: they deal in Contrary and Discordant Elements.

And

And thus I have in some measure performed the Task which I set my self, viz. to let you see how Truth is lost, and how Error is embraced by Mens *Running into Extremes*. That this is the usual Cause of Mistakes and Fallhoods in Religion is observed by *Theodoret* in his *Third Dialogue against Heresies*. And an other Antient and Pious Father was Apprehensive of This when he handled the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as Those Words of his testify,

" * We Worship the Father and the Son,
 " and the Holy Ghost (saith he,) distinguish-
 " guishing the Proprieties, but not separating the Divinity: we do neither contract three into one, lest we should labour under the Error of *Sabellius*, nor do we make these three to be three distinct Essences, lest we should be guilty of *Arius* his Wild Mistake. For what Necessity is there that we should deal in This Case as it is done sometimes to a Bough or Plant? When it inclineth to one side more than an other, some are apt to Bend it as much towards the Contrary side, and so correct one Distortion by an other, whereas they should rather bend it so Gently that it may stand in a *Middle* posture, and incline no more to one side than to an other. And so we ought to act in the

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“ Case that is before us, and thereby
 “ place our selves in the *Right Limits* and
 “ *Due Boundaries* which are set us in Di-
 “ vinity: * when I name the *Middle* I
 “ mean *Truth*. Judge you now whether
 this Learned Writer, who was excellently
 skill'd in determining the True Limits of
 the Orthodox Faith, doth not Abet and
 Confirm this Point which I am now insist-
 ing upon. And *Sixtus Senensis* † seems
 to have Consulted This very place of Na-
 zianzen, and indeed to have Referr'd to it
 when he saith, “ Whilst the Antients en-
 “ deavour with all their Might to de-
 “ stroy one Error, they often have fal-
 “ len into an other, or seem at least to
 “ fall, just as Husband men who under-
 “ taking to correct and set streight a
 “ crooked Bough of some Young Plant,
 “ overdo it, and bend it as far on the
 “ other side. And truly this is the Fault
 of the *Moderns* as well as the *Antients*:
 and not only *Papists* but *Protestants* are
 guilty of it.

Iliacos intra muros peccatur & extra.

They are Blameable on Both sides.

And what is the *Reason* of this, think
 you? How comes it that Men run into
 these *Extremes*?

* Μεσότης δὲ ὅταν εἴπω, τὴν Ἀλήθειαν λέγω.
 † In Præfat. l. 9. Biblioth.

I conceive it proceeds from This, that Men think themselves Obliged to take One Part or Other. If they undertake to handle a Point, they reckon they must carry it Clear on One side, or else all is spoiled: they must Necessarily hold to One part, and beat down the Other right or wrong. The Rule is, they must neither give nor take quarter: they must go through with the Work, and make an entire Victory of it, yea a Triumph must be added to the Conquest: for the Victory is not thought perfect unless the Captives be led chain'd through the Streets, unless the Enemy be exposed to shame and contempt. This is the guise of Professed Disputants: but I must needs say I never liked this Way. It is an Irrational Procedure. It destroys all Ingenuous Liberty, and stifles all Argument and Discourse. Now I look upon This very thing to be One Great Source of Error and Imposture in Divinity. Men confidently resolve upon it to give a Solution right or wrong; the Point must be Decided by them one way or other. There is a Necessity, it seems, of letting the Scales fall on This side or That side. But I am of the Opinion that it is Better sometimes to let them hang in an Equal Poize. It may be Afterwards we shall understand these things better: our Conceptions will be Riper. Or, it may be it was not In-

tended we should arrive to a Full Attainment of Truth *Always*. Why then may I not suspend my Verdict? Is it Necessary to give Sentence presently? No truly. The Case before us will admit of a Demur. In many things we must be content to speak *PROBABLY*, not *CERTAINLY*: and when the case is thus, to call others Heterodox and Antichristian because they dissent from us, is ill Manners, and no Christianity. Who knoweth but that Truth hath crept in among our Adversaries? It is convenient to Seek her even There. But they that stiffly resolve to take one side or other, cannot do This, and consequently may miss of Truth. But the Best course we can take is to Seek her in the Path which lies *between* us and our Antagonists, for that oftentimes is observed to be her Situation. We must by no means imagine that we are bound to go as Far as we can from one another, and to take up a quite Contrary part and Opinion. This is a Folly that hath prevailed much in the World, and hath proved the Cause of most Pernicious Errors. An other Reason that may be alledged of the foresaid Disorder is This, that *Choler* and *Passion* inflame Mens Minds, and push them on to These *Extremes*. In the heat of their pursuit they advance too far: being in their career and

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full speed they cannot stop themselves. In their fit of Zeal against their Adversaries they immoderately lash out. This is observable in *Luther*, that Great Champion against the Romanists; though he manfully withstood the *Antinomians* of his time, and cried out against them as a * *Mischievous Sect*, yet sometimes he could not forbear declining to this *Extreme*, as may be seen in some of his Writings. That Holy Man was so vigorous and fierce in opposing the *Papish* Doctrines of the Merit of Good Works that he lash'd out too far on the other side, and was not able to keep the Golden Mien. And this is the effect of arguing without Temper and Moderation in many other Persons. In the height of their Disputing what will they not assert? When they are grown Fierce and Furious what will they not maintain? Then it must needs happen that, whilst they strike with all their Might against such or such an Opinion, even in Detestation of it they incline too much to an Other Extreme. Then you may Observe that they having got an Advantage of their Adversaries, pursue that Error and Mistake with an Other of their Own as gross, in the Opposite way. To avoid a Falsity on One side they are carried to an Other as Great on the Contrary. So

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they do not lay aside an Error, but only Change it. A Good Notion they get, but they thrust it on too far. They run upon the Borders of Error by Imprudent Zeal and Over-Acting. *THIS* is the True Account of the Disorders and Mistakes which I have been speaking of.

Therefore in the Close of all, let me request you, as you are Lovers of *Truth*, to *avoid Extremes*. Take the *MIDDLE WAY* and then you are Safe. Sail between the Dangerous Rocks on both hands. This alone will be sufficient to help and guide you in finding *Truth*. Only 'tis hard to manage this exactly; and therefore 'tis good to make use of Other Helps. Observe in the World what are the *Extremes* among Disputing and Quarrelling Men, and look what is in the *Middle*: take That and you'll find it to be *Truth*. Keep a Mean between the two *Extremes*: bring your selves to an *Equilibrium*, hold an Equal Ballance without rising or declining on either side. Which it may be is Apostles Meaning in Those Words in 2 Cor. 6. 14. which we render thus, *Be not unequally yoked together*, but they admit of an other Translation, for *ζυγόν* signifies a *Ballance* to weigh in, as well as a *Yoke* to draw in, and therefore *ἰσορροπία* is when the Beam of the Scales inclines more towards one side than an other. So the

Apostle's

Apostle's Meaning may be This, be not more Inclenable to some who seem to be False Teachers (who are here call'd *Un-believers*, because they swerved from the Christian Faith in a great measure) than to some others who preach among you. For your own Security examine and weigh what *both sides* deliver : and when you have discovered the ill Opinions and Practises of *either party*, come out from among them, and be ye separate, ver. 17. But in the mean time be sure to keep an Even Ballance, bear an Equal Poize in your Judgments, do not affect Extremes. This is a Certain Direction to the finding out of *Truth*, which (as I have said) is placed in the *Middle*. Parties and Factions have always stirr'd in the World, and they have constantly set up things to an Excessive Height. One Party must not Yield in the Least to the other. Whilst they run thus High, *Truth* is lost between them, which lies on Neither of the Peremptory Sides, but lodges in a Mean betwixt both. You may justly Suspect those whom you see fly to Extremities. And for your Own Parts, sail between these as between two dangerous Rocks. Make choice of those Opinions which are most remote from Extremity : in all your Disquisitions and Examinations of Doctrines, observe a

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Moderation, steer the Middle Course, and equally defy both Extremes; for This is absolutely necessary not only for the gaining of *Truth*, but the purchasing of *Peace*.

CHAP. X.

Prejudice is an other Cause of Error. It arises from Education and Custom. We must acquaint our selves with Foreign Usages. A particular Enumeration of several of them relating to Habits, Food, &c. The Strangeness of things ought not to hinder our Belief of them. Religion hath suffer'd much from the Prejudices of Education. This shew'd in the Examples of Jews, Pagans, Christians. Men are bias'd by their Particular Employments and Studies. Examples of this. Some Darling-Notions taint all the rest. Examples of this in some of the Antient Writers of the Church: in Dr. Hammond's Interpretations concerning the Gnosticks, and concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem. Other Instances of it in Dr. Lightfoot, Mr. Selden, Critical Writers on the Bible, Mr. Hobbes, Des Cartes, Malebranche. Other Writers censured on the like account. Prejudices arise sometimes

times from a particular Temper and Constitution. In order to the obtaining of Truth we must abandon all our Private Opinions and Prepossessions. We must take Truth from what ever hand it comes. We shall sometimes find it on the Adversaries side.

STRONG Prejudices settled in the Minds of Men are an Other Great Cause of Error and Mistakes in Religion. These indeed have as Powerful and Commanding an Ascendent on the Opinions and Doctrines of Men as any thing that I have mention'd before. Prejudicate Thoughts and Forestalled Judgments do strangely Pervert the Truth, and lead great numbers of People into very Dangerous Errors and Delusions: and the mischievous Influence of them is to be seen in all Sciences and Faculties. They arise three ways chiefly, first from Education and Custom, secondly from Particular Employments, Professions and Studies, thirdly from a Peculiar Temper of Body.

1. It is certain that the way of Education and Custom which Persons have been used to, have a mighty influence on all their Sentiments and Opinions. We see this in Common and Vulgar instances every Day. Persons have a great esteem for the things which they are accustomed to in the places

places where they live: and you must not think to discourse against these, or to debar them of them by any Means. These are the things which they please themselves with, and often think and talk of, as a *Spaniard* of his *Bull-Feasts*, or a *Norwich-man* of his *Guild*. Men generally have a good Opinion of, yea sometimes value themselves upon the particular Country and Place where they were brought up, and dislike none of its usages: otherwise * *Barclay* would not have made *Scotland* a *Paradise*. † Whatever we are bred up with is Sweet, we are much delighted with what our Education hath commended to us: nay, we can scarcely prevail with our selves to believe that there are Contrary Customs among other People. Whence oftentimes Men dote on their Domestick Impressions, and will not entertain any Apprehensions concerning Foreign Discoveries, and thereby hinder the knowing and spreading of Truth. To correct this particular Effect of Prejudice arising from Education and being immured within our own Walls, we must take care to acquaint our selves with the different usages of People in other parts of the World; and when we hear them,

* In Euphorm.

† Πᾶν σύνιστον γλυκύ. Eurip.

we ought not, because they are Strange, to conclude them to be untrue, as is the general practise of vulgar and prepossess'd Minds. Thus the People of *Theffaly* that first rode on Horses in those Regions, were thought to be *Monsters*, half Horse and half Man, and they were nicknamed and hooted at by the Neighbours as *Centaur*s. Why? Because every New practise is counted Monstrous. Wherefore it is requisite that we be manly and judicious in our Thoughts and Conceptions, and that we measure not the Truth of things by the Commonests or Strangeness of them. And to this purpose I will propound some Particulars, to fix this matter the better on our Minds, and to shew the necessity of informing our selves concerning Foreign Usages, lest our Home-Prejudices stifle our free Reception of Truth. As to *Habits* and *Garbs*, and what may be reduced to that Head, we read that in other places there have been and are great Variations from what we observe among our selves, and indeed they vary from one an other. The Nobility and Great Men were, on solemn Occasions, clad in *White* Apparel of old in the *Eastern* Countries, whence * *Chorim albi* in the Holy Language are *Nobiles*, *Magnates*. None heretofore could have

* Neh. 4. 14. 5. 7. Eccl. 10. 17. Isa. 34. 12. Jer. 27. 19.

have Audience of the King of *Spain* unless he appear'd in a *Black* suit of Clothes. Ecclesiastical Persons in *Moscow*, and such as are out of the Emperors Favour wear Long Hair; the rest cut their Hair very close, though the Country is so cold. The *MUFTI* among the *Turks* is clad like a Forester all in *Green*. Yet to be cloth'd in *White* is a Mourning Badge among the *Turkish* Gentry: and we are told that those of *Japan* mourn in the same Colour, but rejoyce in *Black*. The *Eastern* People pull off their Shoes in token of Reverence, whereas the *Western* doff their Hats: the one uncover the Feet, the other the Head to express the same Devotion. Ornaments and Finery are according to the reputed, not real value of the Materials, whence some *Indian* Kings have Crowns made of Feathers. There is a People in those parts whose Houses are all cover'd with Gold, but they wear Iron Rings in their Lips and Ears. And *Beauty* itself varies according to the Determination of Different Ages. Yellow Locks were thought most Graceful by the *Roman* Ladies of old. Some Nations reckon it beautiful to Stigmatize themselves, and wear Letters in their Foreheads. Some of the *East-Indians* flash and pink their Flesh, and reckon it a great piece of Gallantry. In the same Country there are People that

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file their Teeth as sharp as Needles, and think it some Accomplishment. Among the *Malabars* it is fashionable and genteel to wear Long Nails. The *China-Women* would take it ill if they were debar'd from swadling their Feet, and rendring them as Small as they can possibly make them, for this is look'd upon there as the greatest Ornament of the Sex. These things seem at first very strange, because they are not like ours, but we betray gross *Prejudice* if on that account we deem them not to be True, or wonder at them as Incredible.

Then as to *Food*, even there *Custom* strangely sways, and the Difference of Times and Countries gives Laws accordingly. Men heretofore made a shift to feed upon Acorns, they were glad of that which now is Swines Meat. In *Mecenas's* Days the flesh of young Asses was eaten as a Rarity. At *Heliogabalus's* Table the Combs of Cocks were Dainties, and *Lampridius* tells us that he had the flesh of Camels serv'd up. If Mr. Ray's Information be true, Puddings are not a dish known in *Italy*, *France*, and *Holland*: Puddings and Brawn are proper to *England*, he saith. We mention it with some wonder that *Indians* eat raw Flesh, but we marvel not at our selves for eating Oysters raw, nay alive, and for extolling rotten Cheese, and
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devouring with it hundreds of Mites. It is frequent in *Holland* to mix sheeps dung with their Cheeses, to give them a colour and a relish. And we our selves can eat that green stuff in Lobsters, which is indeed their Ordure. In *Italy* they eat Snails and Frogs. Mushrooms and Toad-stools are a Salad to some Persons. The *Turks* eat great quantities of Opium, and it doth them no harm: they will take an Ounce of it at a time, and find it refreshing; whereas we dare not usually venture upon more than two or three Grains. So that it is *Prejudice* (as from these smaller Instances appears) to measure others by our selves. As to the Manner of Dressing and Preparing Food, what is more diversified? I have read that in all Inns in *Venice* they boil Meat first before they roast it, which renders it insipid. In *Spain* they roast meat with the Coles under it. In *Italy* they scrape Cheese into all their Dishes of Flesh or Fish. The *Babylonians* are wont to roast Eggs by whirling them about in a Sling; the swiftness of the Motion performing the office of Fire: but it would be endless to proceed here. So as to the Manner and Posture of eating, what difference is there? Heretofore they lay upon Beds round about a Table, and they lay on their left sides leaning, which one would think should be very unwholesom, and
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inconvenient for the passing of the Meat : yet this Posture was used by *Persians, Greeks, Romans, Jews*, and other Nations. The *Turks* at this Day sit at their Meat as Tailors do at their Work, *Cross-legg'd*. And, which may seem as strange to some, they use the same gesture in their *Mosques*, they eat and worship in the same manner. Under this Head I will mention *Tobacco*, which is both Meat and Drink to some Persons. In this one Plant we may see the power of Prejudice working by Education. When it was used only by the *Americans*, our Travellers wondred at it, and could not imagine what Pleasure they were able to take in it, and what Benefit they could find in dry Smoak : nay, when it was brought over hither, the use of it seem'd strange at first, and continued so a considerable time, for almost twenty Years after it was imported and used, King *James*, and others wrote against it, and some Preachers publickly inveigh'd against it, and it was cried down by Multitudes as an Heathenish Weed, and a Hellish Vapour. Yet afterwards this *Indian* Plant grew into esteem and credit, and it hath been a long time, and is like to be the Diversion of the Wise and Virtuous, as well as of the other rank of People. And the same may in some part be said of *Coffee*, which was a *Turkish* Liquor, and ne-

ver heretofore used in these Countries, but now is drank in all parts of *Europe*.

I will go on, and hint at some Other Practises and Observances which are appropriated to particular Regions and Countries. The *Hebrews* counted their sums of Money by *Shekels*, the *Greeks* by *Drachms*, the *Romans* by *Sesterces*. In *Æthiopia* their Money is Pepper: in the Kingdom of *Tombuto* it is Cockles and Shel-fish: in other places (saith *Purchas*) Paper and Barks of Trees. The *Turks* prefer the Left Hand to the Right: so the People of *Japan* in walking observe the Left as most Honourable. Though writing from the left to the right in a direct Line be now in use among our selves and most Nations, and is thought to be most Commodious and Fitting, yet it is certain that moving the Pen from the right hand to the left was the Antientest Practise of all, and used by the *Hebrews*, and indeed by the *Eastern* People generally, who think we write Backwards; and we are even with them, for we think the same of them. But who can give a reason why the *Æthiopians* differ from both, and write not from either right or left Hand, but from top to bottom? And so do the *Chinoise*, and some *Indians*, they draw their Characters perpendicularly. As to *Women*, we have such foreign Narratives

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gives as these, that the kindest Wives in *Æthiopia* will needs be buried alive with their Husbands. Among the *Indians* there are some Spouses that voluntarily choose to be burnt to death on the same Funeral Piles with their Beloved Consorts. The Females go abroad, and the Men lie in for their Wives in some Countries. In some parts of *Brasil* the Men suckle their Children, and for that purpose have very great Breasts, full of Milk, whereas the Women have but small dugs. The *West-Indians* offer their Wives and Daughters to Strangers that come to their Houses, in token of Friendship and Hospitality. The King of *Calecut* in the *East-Indies* lies not with his Queen the first Night; but one of the Priests doth, who hath a Gratuity bestow'd upon him for that Service. The *Tartar*-Women sit on horse back, riding like Men. They never lie in bed for their travel of Child-birth. They calculate the Beauty of the Sex from the smalness of their Noses, which therefore they take care to reduce to as little bulk as possibly they can. And other such like Usages might be named, which may seem incredible to those that have not been abroad, or have not read the Manners of Strangers. Idiots and Mad Men are held in great Honour with the *Mahometans*, and are reverenc'd and esteem'd as Saints. An Horse-

Tail is an Ensign of Command in the *Ottoman* Army. The People of *Japan* mount their Steeds on the right side. In *China* the Son is bound to be of his Fathers trade, or to exercise himself in that way of Life which his Parents or Ancestors were of. The Children here lament the death and loss of their Parents three Years together, and stir not out of doors all that time. The People on the coast of *Africk* call'd *Guinea*, when their King dies, kill four or five hundred Slaves to make his Equipage, and attend his Majesty to the other World. In *Moscovy* they board their Streets with Fir, instead of paving them with Stone: and they buy their Houses ready made in the Markets. In this Country the People after Dinner shut up their Shops, and go to sleep. And the like is practis'd in most parts of *Italy*; few People walk the Streets between two and four in the afternoon, but they generally lie down and take a nap. In some parts of this Country, but especially in *Venice*, to break a bottle of Ink over one, or over the Door of ones House, is the highest Affront imaginable. Thus there are very Strange Apprehensions and Customs abroad in the World, some Countries are of one way, and some of an other. And so as to the Difference of Creatures and Quality of Soils, there is still matter for

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our Observation, but none for our Incredulity and Disbelief. *Africa* is famed for Monsters and Strange Beasts; and without doubt some of ours would be as strange to them, and perhaps pass for Monsters. There was a City in *Italy*, as *Tully* tells us, where the fall of Rain made the ground dusty, but Drought made it dirty and muddy. I could descend to other things of Remark; A late Traveller of good repute tells us that in *Germany* he saw a Gun which was shot off forty times without charging it a new. And the same Worthy Gentleman mentions a Knife swallow'd by a Peasant in *Germany*, which remain'd nine Months in his Stomach; and then was safely cut out.

All which passages are serviceable to the widening of Mens narrow Thoughts and Conceptions, which are tied down generally to things that they see at home, and which are common, and which every body converses with. So it is that the Strangeness of things makes them to be unbeliev'd by them; and even thence many Relations in Sacred Scripture are look'd upon as false, because they are so different from what is now, and what Men daily have notice of. These Men cannot persuade themselves that such things ever were, because they see nothing of this nature among themselves, in the Place

and Country they live in. Wherefore I offer'd these foresaid Occurrences and Customs to the Consideration of such Readers as are apt to be misled by *Prejudice*, that these things of the World and of Common Life might remind them what they are to do in some higher and greater Matters. That is, they must not think the Strangeness of things to be an Argument of their Falseness, but they ought to believe them notwithstanding they have not been bred up and used to such Occurrences and Practises. This is the more to be attended to because so great Miscarriages have proceeded from the contrary *Prejudice*: and this is that which in the next place I will briefly shew, that *Religion* hath much suffer'd by reason of this rooted Notion in the Minds of great numbers of Men, that they must not believe or practise any thing but what they have been used to, and what their Education hath instil'd into them. Nothing is True or Good which hath not this Stamp. This was remarkable in the *Jews* at our Saviour coming into the World. Their Minds were Prejudiced by their Education: and by reason of That the first Preachers of the Gospel found it exceeding Hard to bring them off from their Mosaical Rites and Ceremonies, and all the other Modes of Worship and Religion which they had been

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been *Accustomed* to. The Three Great Sects among the Jews before and at Christ's Coming were the *Pharisees*, the *Sadducees*, and *Essens*. These were the Considerable Parties that gave Authority to any Opinions and Doctrines in those Days: and the Persons who were *Bred* and *Brought up* in any of These stiffly asserted their Peculiar Notions, and it was a Difficult task to perswade them to the contrary. Such and such Tenents were riveted into them by *Long Custom*, they were fixed by *Education*, and then it was no wonder that *Error* grew up with them, and was entertained as *Truth*.

So likewise the Religion of the *Gentiles*, no less than that of the *Jews*, was the Religion of their *Country* and was espoused and embraced by Virtue of *Custom* and *Education*. The Profession of *Cotta*, who was one of them, may pass for the Sense of them All, viz. that * *no Discourse either of the Learned or Unlearned should ever remove him from the Opinion receiv'd from his Ancestors concerning the Worship of the Gods*. Hence it was that the *Pagan Philosophers* confined and fetter'd their own Reasons, were Inslaved to their Received Principles, and were not at Liberty to listen to those Clear Arguments which the Gospel tender'd to them. They

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* Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2.

would not lay aside their former Prejudices which they had first taken up, and on that score the Christian Doctrine seem'd to be full of Solecisms and Absurdities. They stuck to their Idolatry and Superstition because they had been Bred up in them, and they rejected the Christian Religion, because they were not Acquainted with it. As dogs fawn on Domesticks, but Bark at Strangers, so these Men were Averse to the Notions they were not Used to, and shew'd themselves very fierce against them, but they were very indulgent to their Home-bred Errors, and entertain'd them with great delight and blandishment. This Antipathy reached to the *Persons* of the *Christians* as well as their *Religion*. So the Antient *Apologists* tell us that it was Objection enough of old against them, that they were *Christians*. The very Name impeach'd them; * such a one was a *Good Man*, were it not that he was a *Christian*. This was the effect of a Strong Prejudice, and that Prejudice was founded on Education. The *Papists* are misled into Error after the same manner. This I reckon as one Main Reason why so Many Persons in that Church (and several of them doubtless Men of Worth and Ingenuity) are Deluded and Deceived, and with great

* Vir bonus Caius Sæus tantum quod Christianus. Tertullian.

great Zeal and Vigour maintain things which are against Sense, and Reason and Scripture, viz. because they have as it were Sucked in those Opinions with their Nurses Milk, they have been taught and train'd up to them from their *Child-hood*, they have had them Continually Urged upon them, and they have been ever Accustomed to them. And this is the Cause of Error among *Protestants* also, i. e. amongst some that give themselves that Name. They are not so Wise as to consider whether the Opinions they hold be really True in themselves, but they adhere to them because they had their Education among those who believe so, and because the *Family* they lived in, and *Company* they convers'd with are of that way. Use and Custom are their strongest Reasons, and the best Argument they have to prove Truth by its Agreement with that Sect or Party which they first adhered to. They hold fast those Sentiments which they arrived to by this Means; whence it is that they so often persist in Error. When we are bias'd by the Prejudices of Education, we not only run headlong into Mistakes, but Remain in them almost without remedy. For when false Principles are instill'd into us in our Minority, and when we are also in the Non-age of our Judgments, it is a difficult task to remove
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and eradicate them, and to correct the Errors of that first and early Concoction : for those Principles grow up with us, and become part of us, and are turned into our very Temper and Constitution. Some Men on this account are so unhappy that That Opinion is by them presently concluded to be *False* and *Erroneous* (whether it be so or no) which is not conformable to the Notions which their *Education* infused into them, or which themselves had not *Early* Entertain'd. And truly there must be grains of Allowance given upon This very score. It ought to be consider'd that Most Men labour under *Great* (but I cannot say *Unavoidable*) *Prejudices*. They take in Notions Betimes (even before they can rightly Judge of them,) and these they Live upon all their Days; These conduct and manage all their Future Apprehensions, and these are made the Measures of all the Doctrines and Discourses which they meet with afterwards. And besides, they Associate only with those of their own Strain, and so are Confirmed in their Principles : for being Used to their Converse, and Loving their Company, they are apt to Approve whatever They dictate, and that passes for Falshood which They Dislike and Condemn.

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and Studies. It is a Good Observation of my Lord Bacon, that it is common with Men to *mingle the Notions of their Particular Set or Calling with every thing they undertake*, and to draw all their Perswasions through the Channel of those Principles which they imbibed thence. There might be several Instances and Proofs given of This. Sometimes Mens Employments and Callings influence on their Notions which respect Philosophy: as the *Musitian* whom * *Tully* speaks of held the *Saul* to be certain Notes of Musick. This Man spoke according to his Profession, as He observes; though He adds he had better not have meddled with Philosophy, but have contented himself with his Fiddle. If this Man had been a Writer, he would constantly have insisted on this Note: he would have made *Harmony* and *Discord* solve all Phænomena in Nature. All the Vices of the Soul, and the Diseases of the Body, and the Disorders in the Universe would have been imputed to these respective things being *out of Tune*. For undoubtly a Man's Pen will favour of his Work and Employment, as is to be seen in Poor *Plantus*, who to get a Livelyhood, was forced to serve a *Baker*, and Grind at a *Mill*. Hence it is that his *Comedies* (which he Studied whilst he was at that Work)

Work) perpetually sound of the *Bakehouse* and *Mill*, and the Severe Discipline of those Places. The State and Manner of Life which Men are used to, affect their Stile. This is observable in *Monfieur Charron*, his Discourses of Morality favour all along of his former Profession, *Pleading* and *Arguing at the Bar*. This we see in an Instance at home: *Mr. Lock*, who much converses with Children and those that are about them, hath throughout his Book of *Humane Understanding* continual References to what *Children say*, and what *Children do*, and to their *Mothers* and *Nurses* Notions: nay, to let us see how our Studies infect our very *Phrase*, he gravely mentions *digging out of the Parly-bed*, pag. 198. Concerning the same Writer it is observed by the Reverend Bishop of *Worcester* that his Notion of *Ideas*, as he hath shaped it, hath influence upon his other Sentiments, for he having first fixed that Notion, and taken much pains about it, he thought all other things were to be entertain'd as they appear'd consistent with this, and not otherwise. [The Bishop's Answer to *Mr. Lock's* Second Letter.] And in the same place this Excellent Prelate hath this Remark, *I plainly see*, saith he, *that a New Notion, when it hath got deep into a Man's Head, doth give a strange Turn to his understanding:*

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so that he cannot see that which every one else can that hath not the same Tincture upon his Mind. We may take notice that one Particular Study or one Single Notion sometimes is spread through a whole Book, and ferments every part of it. See this in *Physick*, if I may be so bold as to offer any Remarks on the Performances of those of the Medick Art. One admired Notion or Hypothesis taken up diffuses it self through all the rest. *Barbette* solves the Nature of all Diseases by a Thick and Sharp *Lympha*. *Ramsy* a Physitian makes *Worms* the cause of most Distempers in the Body. And I have sometimes met with an other who attributes the most frequent Maladies and Pains to a *Flatus* or *Wind*. And we shall find that the Particles of *Alkalilate* or *Fixed Salt*, and of *Acid* or *Volatile Salt* in the Body solve all Diseases, yea all Phenomena in *Physick* with a Learned * Doctor of this Age.

So Men mix their Other Notions even with *Theological* ones: as is to be seen in *Justin*, *Origen* and some other Antient Writers of the Church, who being Philosophers before they were Christians, did retain still some unsound Principles of Philosophy, and unwarily mix'd them with Christianity. From *Platonism* which was generally upheld by those Writers.

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* Dr. Willis.

several Errors crept into the Church, because they could not presently lay aside the Notions which their Minds were stain'd with. Hence **Tertullian* inveigh'd against the *Platonists* as the Authors of *Heresy*; and both † he and ‥ *St. Jerom* vote them to be the *Patriarchs of Hereticks*. It was the Unhappiness of those Fathers to mix their Philosophick Notions with their Divinity, whence their Writings so often savour of them, to the prejudice of Truth. Of *Tertullian* himself it may be observed that when he was gone over to the *Montanists*, all the Writings he publish'd savour'd of that Defection, and every Book almost mention'd the *Paraclete* that *Montanus* asserted. The same fault is in several of the Moderns: some one peculiar strain runs through all their Works, and taints them. *Jacob Behmen* had Excellent Notions, but besides that they were spoil'd by his Obscurity, he hath much wrong'd them by perpetual giving them a relish of his Darling Studies, *i. e.* Chymistry and Astrology; all his Writings of Religion have a Taste of these, and are miserably blinded every where with *Tinctures* and *Essences*, *Starry Influences*, &c. Mens Genius and Inclination

* De quorum ingenio omnis hæresis anitur. Adv. Marcion. l. 1.

† De animâ. cap. 3.

‥ Ad Ctesiph. adv. Pelag.

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tion in Other things have an Operation upon them as to Divinity. If I may speak freely, I could Observe that Men fit the *Church-Discipline* to those Conceptions which they frame and like of Civil-Government. Those that most approve of an Absolute Sovereignty and Monarchy in a Kingdom, approach to the Like in Ecclesiasticks, and set up an Universal Pastor. They that are for a Mixt-Monarchy or Aristocracy, affect the same in the Church, and mingle Lay-Elders with their Other Presbyters. But those that fancy Democracy in the State are for an Independency also of Churches, where the People govern all. Thus they shape the Church according to the State or Secular Government they most approve of. I mention this, not for the merit of the thing it self, but to shew the rise and ground from whence Men sometimes take their Opinions of things even in Religion, they fetch them from their Civil Affairs. Their Church-Notions have a deep tincture of their State-ones, whereas it is from the Holy Canon that we should take our measures of these things, or where that is silent, from the true Reasons of them.

Not with any Disparagement to the Vast Learning of our Reverend *Annotator* on the New Testament, I might observe that

that he interprets Many Places according to the Standard of some Notions which he had a Particular Kindness for. These Beloved Conceits are urged on all occasions by him, and his Interpretations and Comments are Tinctured every where with them. He is always in the *Epistles* referring to the *Gnosticks*, and their *Filthy and Unnatural Practises*, and he makes some Texts speak of them as actually in being, before there were any such Hereticks. For, if we will credit some Authors, they arose not till the reign of *M. Aurelius Antoninus* which was about a hundred and thirty Years after Christ's Passion, and therefore Dr. *Cave* entitles the *Second Age* the *Gnostick Age*. But though perhaps this doth too much postpone them, yet it is probable that this Sect was not in being in *St. Paul's* time: and truly the Learned *Annotatour* doth as good as confess this himself. For he tells us that by the *Man of Sin* foretold in *2 Thess. 2. 3.* is meant *Simon Magus*: yet, as *Theodore* and some others inform us, this Sorcerer was the first Founder of the *Gnosticks*. If this was the Person that was foretold, then he was not come at that time, at least he had not broach'd his Heresies, and shew'd his feats when *St. Paul* writ this Epistle to the *Thessalonians*: whence 'tis plain that this Author con-

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sites himself, and that he finds the *Gnostick Hereticks* before their Founder appear'd. However, passing by the Doctors oversight here, (for 'tis not to be doubted but that *Simon Magus* was in the Apostle's time) and granting the *Gnostick Sect* was peeping up in St. Paul's time, yet it is probable it was not so notoriously spread then as to be taken notice of and refer'd to by the Apostle in almost every Chapter of his Epistles, as the Learned Annotatour thinks. Though *Simon Magus* might be said to be the Father and first Founder of the *GNO-STICK* Heresy, yet 'tis certain (as *Irenaeus*, *Epiphanius* and *Augustin* relate) that it grew up under *Cerintus*, and the *Nicolaitans*, and afterwards under *Menander*, *Saturninus*, *Basilides* and *Carpocrates*, who were the Foster-Fathers of it, and shaped it into that which is call'd the *Heresy of the Gnosticks*. Now, these were all after St. Paul, and the last of them arose in the Second Century, in the reign of the Emperour *Adrian*, about the Year 130. Conformably to this the *Gnosticks* are reckon'd by * *Epiphanius* as the successors of the *Nicolaitans*, *Saturninians*, and *Basilidians*. And *Tertullian* and *Irenaeus* testify that the *Gnosticks*, as they were a distinct Sect from others, began first to be taken notice of A. D. 160. at the beginning of *Antoninus's*

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* Adv. haeref. l. 1. tom. 1.

Reign. But supposing with some that the *Gnosticks* appear'd much sooner, viz. at the latter end of St. *John's* time, and that they with other Hereticks are stiled by him *Anti-Christ's*, and that his first Epistle is written partly against them, they (as well as *Ebion* and *Cerintus*) denying the Divinity of our Saviour; yet on this Supposition St. *Paul* could not mention the *Gnosticks* in his Epistles, because he was put to death in the thirteenth Year of Nero's Reign, and in the Year of our Lord 69. which was near thirty Years before St. *John* wrote that Epistle.

And as this Learned Writer thinks the *Gnosticks* are every where meant and spoken of in the Epistles, so likewise his Mind is so fix'd on the Destruction of *Jerusalem* (concerning that to be a Main thing refer'd to in the New Testament) that he strangely forceth several Texts to look that way, even when it is evident that they have quite an other Aspect. Thus according to him *so great Salvation*, Heb. 2. 3. is the saving or delivering of the Christian Converts from their Enemies the *Jews* by the Destruction of them in *Jerusalem* when that place was taken. Yea, St. *Peter's* Words, *receiving the end of your Faith, even the Salvation of your Souls*, 1 Pet. i. 9. are meant of this Temporal Deliverance. And so St. *Jude's* Common

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Salvation hath the same import. Nay, (but not diminishing the Worth of so Learned and Religious a Person, one who is in many things a very Sagacious Expofitor, and hath by his Excellent *Paraphrase* and *Annotations* enlightned many difficult Places, and rendred the Texts clear) I might truly add that he will fcarcely permit the Word *σωτηρια* or *σωτηρια* to be meant any where in the New Testament of *Spiritual and Eternal Salvation*. And fo with fome regret I add that he deals after the fame manner with the Word *Election*: the remnant according to the *Election of Grace*, Rom. 11. 5. are thofe few Jews that efaped from the Common Deftroction of *Jerufalem*. The *Election* which St. Peter advifes the Chriftians to make fure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. is the peculiar favour of being deliver'd and refcued from the Common Slaughter at the Siege of *Jerufalem*, when the reft were deftroy'd. And in the fame Chapter this day of Deliverance to the Jews is meant by *the day dawning, and the day-star arifing in their Hearts*, ver. 19. and it might be obferv'd that he always interprets *the Coming of Chrift* concerning that univerfal Deliverance. So intent was his Mind on the Deftroction of *Jerufalem*, and the Deliverance of fome from it, fo poffefs'd was he with thefe thoughts, that he imagin'd

every Passage made for him, and was to be understood of those Ideas which he had fettled in his Mind. These and some Others are his *Idola Specus*, his Peculiar Prejudices and Private Prepossessions. And it may be there are but few Men in the World who have not *theirs*, though of an other nature. These are interspersed generally among all their other Notions, yea so inlaid into them that you cannot have *one* without the *other*.

It is easy to see this in the Learned Author (whom I had occasion lately to mention on an other account) of the *Philosophical Disquisition concerning the Laws of Nature*: he being one that had always inured himself to *Mathematical* Studies, gives us too evident a Proof of it even in that part of his Discourse, which refers to *Morality*, and the several Exertments of it, where, according to the early Notions which he had possess'd his thoughts with, he resolves all Moral Philosophy into *Mathematical* and *Mechanick* Principles, and makes it all hang by *Geometry*.

So of the Reverend Doctor *Lightfoot's* Works it may be remark'd that a Vein of *Rabbinism* runs through them all. That Learned Man hath by his skill in the *Hebrew* Language and Customs marvelously explain'd and illustrated sundry places of the Old and New Testament: many difficult Passages he hath rendred easy and

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intelligible, and the World is infinitely indebted to him for his making the *Jewish* and *Rabbinical* Writings so serviceable to Religion, and particularly to the Christian. But yet this his great and intimate Acquaintance with the *Hebrew* Doctors betrays him to some Miscarriages, whilst his Mind is too intent upon them, for hereby his Books run all one way, and in the same strain, that is, all his Discourses, Sermons and Treatises of what Subject soever smell of those *Jewish* Doctors and Rabbies. It were easy to shew how this Talmudick Vein hath caused him to take up strange and unaccountable Notions, absurd and dangerous Opinions in Divinity, and that of a very high concernment, as you may see in his *Sermons* lately printed. He will have every thing borrow'd from the *Temple* and *Synagogue*: he thinks he finds every where in the New Testament allusions to the *Jewish* Sayings or Customs, though some of them have been among the *Jews* only since Christ's time: and consequently neither Christ nor the Apostles could refer to them. But I will not enlarge here, out of reverence to the Doctor's Ashes, and from that profound esteem which I have of so Worthy and Excellent a Person, whose very Failings and Extravagancies have more worth in them then the Plodding Orthodoxy of some other

Writers. This is to be attributed to his way of Study, which was Talmudick and Rabinical, and thence all his Writings are ting'd with this, and have a constant smack of *Hebrew Learning*. Thus it was with that great Man, Mr. *Selden*, as all that have perused his Works, especially *de Jure Naturali & Gentium*, must needs acknowledge. He convers'd chiefly with *Jewish* and *Rabinical* Writers, and thence it is that not any Man of his great Worth hath espoused their Notions more. Thence he Judaizes so frequently in many things, and particularly about Fornication and Polygamy he strangely sides with the *Hebrew Doctors*, sometimes in defiance of the Laws of Christianity, and the Institutions of the Gospel. Thus it was with Mr. *Gregory* in some degree, as it were easy to make good.

Thus it is with some Other Authors who are great admirers of the *Hebrew* Writings, especially *Criticks* on the Bible: every thing almost that they meet with there is perfectly *Jewish* with them: the Words, Phrases, Actions, Customs are all taken from the *Rabins*, they fancy: and hence we have most strange and monstrous Interpretations of some places of Scripture. It must not, it cannot be denied that many Passages of Holy Writ receive great Light from what we read in those

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those Rabinical Authors, and 'tis impossible to understand aright the meaning of some places without these: so that on this account the Writers who have convers'd with those Authors are of great use. But there is an Excess in this way, and that is when they imagine every Expression almost hath relation to some *Jewish* phrase or usage, when they undertake to apply every thing they meet with in the *Talmud* to some passages in Scripture, though it be very wide from the purpose, yea though it be nothing allied to it. But then they are pleased to imagine an alliance, being a Fanciful sort of Men, as indeed no other can be expected from those who converse so much with Persons of that prodigious Fancy that the *Talmudists* and *Rabbies* generally are noted for, who (as it is known, and is confess'd by * One that hath convers'd with them) abound with *putid Fables*, *impertinent Trifling*, *ridiculous Disputes*, *odd Conceits*, *fantastical Observations and Explications*, *childish Reasonings*, *groundless Arrogance and Self-conceit*. But I forbear adding any more of this nature: and as for what I have already said, I desire it may be understood as spoken with great deference and submission to those Excellent Men, whose Worth is well known in the Learned World. Perhaps

* Dr. Bright, Pref. to Dr. Lightfoot's Works.

haps there is no Man on Earth that falls not under this Imputation, no Man but hath some byass, no Man of great Study but hath a Darling Notion. And then it doth harm when 'tis too much cherished, when it is suffer'd wholly to guide, or rather to mislead all the other Conceptions of the Mind, when every thing is drawn into Compliance with it, and forced to bow down to it, and when 'tis made the absolute Rule and Patern of of all Sentiments and Opinions.

This is a thing not uncommon, Men frame one thing according to the Idea they have of an other, and one ill-chosen Notion infects all the rest. So of old the *Epicureans*, who lite on this vile Conceit, that *Happiness* consists in a life of Ease and Pleasure, suffer'd this to overrule them in their Apprehension which they formed of a *Deity*, viz. that he is one that concerns not himself in any thing that is done in the World, but lives an idle Life, and takes his Ease. So our Country-man Mr. *Hobbes* frames a Notion of *God* according to the Opinion he entertain'd of the *Magistrate* or *Supreme Ruler*, and accordingly * he tells us that the Obligation of Obedience to God is founded only on his Omnipotency, and the Weakness of Man: that God hath the

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* De Cive, cap. 15. parag. 7.

right of ruling us because we are weaker than he: from fear and conscience of our own Imbecility we are bound to obey him. Thus Men represent things according to the Models and Hypotheses they have made of other things. *Des Cartes* having his thought always on his *Mechanism*, he makes use of the same Principle to solve even Moral things; he explains the *Passions* by it, he shows that these are all produced in a Mechanical way, i. e. by Matter and Motion. Thus he carries it on too far, the reason is, his beloved Idea of *Moved Particles* was always before him. That one Master-Notion influenc'd on all the rest. His Great Admirer *Monsieur Malebranche* takes notice of this, and how one sort of Study makes so deep an impression on some Mens Thoughts, that they always make use of it, though never so impertinently. * He tells of one who compiled several Books concerning the *Cross*, which made him see *Crosses* where ever he came: whence *Morinus* laugh'd at him for believing a Certain Medal to represent a *Cross*, when it resembled a thing of a quite different nature. And he observes concerning our Country-man *Gilbert*, that after he had studied the *Load-stone*, he fancied he met with a Magnetick quality in

* Search after Truth. Book 2. chap. 2.

in several other things, which had no affinity with the Magnet. Nor is Monsieur *Malebranche* himself free from this Tincture I am speaking of, witness his *Traces of the Brain*, his *Ideas*, his *Union of Soul and Body*, his *Sensations*, which fill all his Writings. Besides, these are fraught every where with a *Quarrelsome* Humour, and a *Peevish* Spirit, and a high esteem of his own Conceits and Notions: and sometimes he is highly *Enthusiastick*. All his Works have a smack and savour of some of these.

So a Worthy Writer of our own (whom I may well joyn with *F. Malebranche*, seeing he is so lavish an Extoller of him) hath imbibed two or three *Platonick* Notions, which (as is easy to discern) insinuate themselves into several Passages of his Writings, and mix themselves with his Arguings. And there are some other *Spiritual* and *Mystical Writers* that he hath convers'd with, from whom he hath taken a Relish, and thence most of his *Sermons*, *Discourses*, and *Letters* taste of them, and that very strongly. So it happens that some of the most Ingenious Men we can name have adopted some Particular Sentiments and Strains which leaven all the rest. As we see it in the Body, the part that labours under some Malady affects the other Parts, so 'tis in the Writings

things of Men, one ill affected Notion taints the others, and assimilates them to it. If they have a great liking to an Author's Stile or Matter, their Minds are always full of it, and they would have all others doat on it as well as themselves. It was such an Excess as this which caus'd the foremention'd Writer to commend *Malebranche's* Writings to *Parents* and *Masters of Families*, and to be earnest with them to teach their Children the Contents of them. See his *Spiritual Counsel*. But he should first have consider'd whether they are able to understand him, or if they could, whether there be any thing there to *their* purpose. This proceeds from a mighty surcharge of Love to that Author, and from an Inclination to have a young brood of Scepticks among us, and more especially from that prevailing Tincture so often taken notice of, which causes Writers to blend their beloved Sentiments with every thing, even when there is the least reason for it. There is a known Writer among us, who having possess'd his Mind with Impressions of *Ecclesiastical Antiquity and Authority*, and screw'd them up to their heighth, gives some Disturbance by mixing them with every thing in the Present Church, and applying them at every turn to what he pleases: by which means he hath abused himself and others in some Considerable Matters. It is

is pity a Man of his Reading and Worth should be so miserably bias'd, and that he should make use of his Ecclesiastical History to so ill a purpose. But this must be resolv'd into what I said before, that when a doctrine or theme hath made a deep Impression on a Man, he makes it go along with all his Writings. There are some certain Ideas which are lively in Mens Minds, and present themselves to them on all occasions, and even thrust themselves in sometimes when there is no occasion. They entertain themselves chiefly with such or such a peculiar Notion, and from that one they infer all : like * the Philosopher that, when they told him a stone fell from Heaven, concluded the whole Heavens were made of Stone. But let us be careful how we conduct our Notions, let us distinguish of the Nature of Beings, and not conclude all things to be like some, or sottishly make one thing the Standard of all, lest by this means we entertain Error and Deceit. It is not safe judging of all things according to a Man's particular Study, as I remember *Sixtinus Amama* tells us that the chiefest Errors in *Popery* proceed from the ignorance of the *Hebrew* idiom. The Man spoke according to his Study and Art : but if we indulge such narrow Conceptions, we shall miss of Truth.

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* Diog. Laert. in Anaxagorâ.

3. There are very Strong Prejudices arising likewise from a Particular Temper and Constitution: and by reason of this very frequently Men are Deluded and Imposed upon, and Error is entertain'd in the place of Truth. There are some very Strange Tempers in the World. * *Demon* the Steward of *Alexander* the Great's House was wont to sweat in the Shade, and quake for cold in the Sun. *Antonia* the Wife of *Drusus* did never spit. † *Antipater* a Poet had constantly an Anniversary Fever. There are || some Men that chew the cud. And a hundred other Instances of this Nature might be produced, whence it is easy to gather that the Mind (which usually follows the sway of the Bodily Temper) is in some Persons very oddly affected and disposed: and this Disposition which is so different from that of other Men breeds a Singularity of Conceptions and Opinions. For there is a great Correspondence between the Souls of Men and the Organized Matter in which they reside. It is true, they both mutually act on one another, but the influence of the Grosser part of Man on the other is the most apparent, because it is more Common, there being far more Persons that are led by their Bodies than by their

* Laert. in Pyrrho.

† Val. Maz. l. 1. c. 8.

|| T. Burnet. Thesaur. Med. Pract.

their Souls. Hence it is that Men speak and write according to their Tempers: their Pens move in a different way from others because their Bodily Inclination varies from them: their Writings receive a peculiar Air from their particular Crasis. This makes it appear that some certain Dispositions of Body are great Impediments to Mens Apprehensions. Impartial Reason and Experience tell us that some are biassed by their Particular Humours, and that their very Natural Constitutions are a cause of their Errors: their Complexions, whether Phlegmatick, or Cholerick, or Melancholick, or Sanguine, shape them out such and such Opinions: their Temper oftentimes is the source of their Mistakes. This made several *Philosophers* of old assert and maintain what they did; and this even among *Christians* hath bred many Unsafe Opinions and Doctrines. A secret Sympathy or Antipathy of Nature hath govern'd their Minds: their Natural and Inbred Propension hath fram'd all their Perswasions and Discourses; These therefore may justly be stiled (as they are by a Late Ingenious Author) *Complexional Errors*. But it must be remembered that I am speaking of the *Voluntary Causes* of Error, and therefore I must adjoin that I mean here by this Temper and Constitution such a Natural Inclination

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clination as Men have Wilfully Foster'd and Increas'd, and have in a manner turn'd into Necessity.

Thus from Without and from Within; *i. e.* from our Education and Studies, and from our Natural Temper and Propension we are too Powerfully Invited to entertain Falshood, and to disregard True Notions of things. This Prejudice and Pre-occupation being thus bred in the generality of Persons, they judge All things according to it. For this very Reason Some Assertions even at the First Proposal gratify their Understandings, and they are imbraced immediately: but there are Others which will never Agree with them, because they jump not with their Inbred Notions and the Dictates of their Prepos- sessed Minds. These Men are most commonly very Obstinate in their Perswasions, they are * Head-strong Opiniatours, and most Severe Assertors of their Preconceiv- ed Notions, though they be never so Wild and Absurd. If you ask them Why they imbrace such an Opinion and Te- nent, their Answer (if according to Truth) must be, They have a strong Fancy for the thing, they have taken up a mighty Conceit of it: besides this is a thing they have been Used to, and Brought up with.

But

* ἰσχυρογνώμιδες καὶ χαλεπαὶ προσάται τῶν ἀπίστων
πράξεων. Synesius.

But This is not an Answer becoming a Rational and Considerate Man: for (as Abraham told the King of Egypt, if an Historian relateth things aright, although truly, I know not how he came by This Passage): * There is a Vast Difference between Truth and Custom. Now because This latter generally excludeth the former, we ought to be very Cautious and Careful. If we heartily desire the purchase of Truth; we must shake off the Prejudices which Custom and Education have loaded us with. If we resolve to be led by These, we cannot be the Sons of Truth: or, if by the conduct of These we ever light on Truth, it is merely by Chance. But the way which I have put you into, Directly and without Failing leads you to Truth. Make it your Business then to extirpate all Prejudices, to clear your Minds of all sorts of Prepossessions, to wipe out all Tinctures, and thereby to make way for Truth to enter into your Souls, and to take possession of them. It was a Brave Exploit, and Worthy of the † Author, to Blot out and Deface all the Opinions which he had ever received into his Belief, that so he might afterwards set up with a New Stock, and

* ——— *Ἡὸν δὲ εἶνα μετὰ ἀληθείας καὶ συνέσιας τῆς διαπορίας.* Cedren. Histor. Compend.
† Renat. Des Cartes.

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choose Better ones into their place, or Re-assume the Same if he found them agreeable to the Rules of Religion. What this Ingenious Man attempted in Philosophy we ought to pursue in Divinity. If we would be Masters of Truth, our best course is to rid our Minds for once of all our Preconceived Opinions, to quit our most Beloved Representations of things, to destroy our Old Notices, to cast away our Former Prejudices, and so to Prepare our Minds for the Reception of Truth. We must always be ready to Change our Opinion for a Better. We must not doat upon any Doctrine because it hath been so Long in the Family, or because we have a Natural Kindness for it, and it seems to suit with our Temper.

And here to give a Great and Undeniable Evidence of your being free from all Prejudice, you must be sure to do This, you must Take Truth from *Whatever* Hands it comes. You must not Disdain the Meanest Helps in order to the Improving your Notions and Advancing your Apprehensions. This is Commended to you in Lower Instances: the Proportions in Musick were found out by *Pythagoras's* Observing the knocking of Hammers on the Anvil in a Smiths Shop. A Learned Physitian of our Own in all his Treatises approves of the Use of Vulgar Medicines

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and Empirical Remedies taken from Mountebanks and Women, and especially * in Agues and Fevers he holds them most Successful. A Wise Man despiseth not Common things, nor from Common Hands, if they may be any ways conducing to Knowledge and Experience. It must be reckoned therefore as an Argument of the *Folly* as well as the *Prejudice* of most Men, that they Admire such and such Mens Names, and Swear in their Words as Infalible Masters. The *Author* with them gives the Value to all that is said, and they receive no Doctrine but for the sake of him that delivers it, and thereby forestall their Judgments, so that Error enters into them the more powerfully, and they are possessed with it beyond all Exorcism. These Men are not resolv'd to Think their Own Thoughts, but Other Mens Minds and Souls actuate them, which is the most Reproachful thing imaginable. They take things on the sole Credit of such and such Persons. They are content to accept of Error, so it cometh from those they Like. But *You* must take an Other course, bearing in Mind that Saying of the Rabbins, † *Truth is not to be Discerned and Judged of by the*

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* Dr. Willis de Febrib.

† Veritas non dignoscitur ex eo qui ipsam invenire facit, sed ex eo solum dignoscitur quod ipsa sit Veritas. Pirke Avoth.

*Persons that propounds it, but Truth is known to be Truth from it self only. Therefore ask not Who it is that handeth it to you whether he be a Trojan, or a Tyrian, or whether he be a Great Man or a Mean One, for from Whomsoever it cometh, it is still Truth. I find that the Jewish Doctors have several Other Sayings to this purpose, as That of Ben Zoma, Who is a Wise Man? He that Learneth of Any Man. As much as to say, Truth is not to be regarded for the Person who offers it: you may accept of it from Any Man Whosoever. And an Other Proverbial Saying is to the like purpose. Truth is to be receiv'd of any one that speaketh it. Many Men will not Observe this, they will not indure Truth if it comes not out of such Mens Mouths as they have a fancy for. Is not This the Carpenter's Son? cried the Prejudiced Jews, as if Christ on That Account was not capable of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, as if Such a Person were not Able to teach them Truth. The like Prejudice doth every where possess Mens Minds, and makes them Averse to True Notions of things. They Condemn Doctrines merely for the sake of the Persons who maintain them, and they had rather be Mistaken with Some Men than be in the Right with Others. Thus Bellarmine * treating of the*

Doctrin of *Free Will* professeth his Mind plainly in These Words, " We imbrace " this Opinion so much the more Willingly because it Displeaseth our Adversaries, especially *Calvin*. That Great Man was exceedingly guilty of This in all his Writings. *Maldonate* the Jesuite is of the same Mind, telling us plainly * that " though some things which *Calvin* holds " are also held by St. *Augustin* and other " Fathers, yet he Renounceth them because *Calvin* holds them. And they that read This Man's Writings may see that he Refuseth several Interpretations of Places of Scripture because they are *Calvin's*. But the Famous St. *Augustin* was of an Other Temper, and willingly imbraced a Doctrine though it was held by an Adversary. Thus though he adhered a long time to St. *Cyprian's* Interpretation of a place of Scripture, afterwards meeting with one *Ticonius* an Heretick who interpreted it otherwise, he imbraced His Exposition as Best. This was the Practise of that Good Father.

For my Own part, I must needs say that I seldom ever read a Considerable Author who maintain'd an Error in Religion, but I have at the same time found some Worthy Strictures of Truth in him: and sometimes such an Author hath discover'd

some

* In cap. 6. Johan. v. 82.

some approachings to Truth on his side, and hath let us see likewise that there are some unsafe Notions, and undue Apprehensions on the other side. An Impartial Reader who loves Truth where-ever he lights on it, and embraces it from whomsoever it comes, cannot but attest that in the Writings of the most Heterodox there are some hints of Truth which perhaps he never took notice of before, and some Common and Vulgar Sentiments receive there a check which they justly deserved: and in short, some Unusual and less Received Truth is dropped in the Scuffle and Bandyng between Truth and Error. Now he that is of a Free and Unbias'd Mind, will not scorn to take it up, and entertain it: he will not think the Worse of it because it hath lain among the Rubbish, because it hath lodged with Error for some time, and hath passed for Such. Thus you are to shew your Freedom from Prejudice by having a Regard for Truth although it be held by an Enemy, and by Casting off Error though it be maintain'd by a Friend. *Aristotle* bravely declared that he would prefer Truth before his Good Friends *Plato* and *Socrates*. He had a Great Respect and Kindness for These, but he had a Greater for Truth. And to the same purpose permit me to offer to you the Admirable Words of That Philosopher,

sopher, in his First Book of *Ethicks*, where speaking against the Opinion of the Great *Plato* concerning *Ideas*, and laying down his Own Notion, he saith thus, * “Per-
 “ haps for the Preservation of Truth it
 “ were Better, and more becoming us to
 “ lay aside our Own Sentiments, and to
 “ abandon our Private Perswasions; for
 “ though both of us be Friends and Dear
 “ to one another, yet it is Sacred and
 “ Religious to Prefer Truth, and to E-
 “ steem That before Our selves and our
 “ Own Notions. Apply This to Religi-
 on, and it will be exceeding Useful and
 Advantagious to you towards the pur-
 chasing of Sacred Truth. You must ge-
 nerously part with all Private Opinions
 and Prejudices, to make way for an Im-
 partial Discovery of what is True and
 Right. You must be clear-spirited, open
 and ingenuous, and receive Truth for its
 own sake. But alas the Contrary Tem-
 per doth generally prevail, and is the Au-
 thor of unspeakable Mischief. The Grand
 fault which a † Learned Man finds in
Baronius's Annals (which were designed-
 ly writ against the *Centuriators*) is that
 he studies every where to Gratify his own
 Party;

* Δέχεται δ' ὅτι ἵσως βελτίον ἦναι, καὶ δεῖν, ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς
 καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὰ δικαία ἀναρῶν. ἀμυνεῖν γὰρ οὐκ
 ὀφείλου, ὅστις προτιμᾷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

† Montague in A. par. 1.

Party ; and This is the Catholick fault of most Writers, the Deplorable Fruits of which are to be seen in the Church. But I take it for an Unquestionable Maxim, that he who would Impartially Deliver Truth must addict himself to No Side or Party. Neither must he who would Learn Truth, but, like a Traveller who is not skilled in the Road, he must Ask which way he must take, and not be Sollicitous whether it be This or That. It is only the *Right Way* he designs, and it is Indifferent to him by Whose Hand he is pointed to it. But I have spoken Largely of this Subject before, when I discours'd of *Authority*, wherefore I will not Resume it here. The Main thing I am to urge is This, that Men would throw away all Prejudices and Prepossessions of what Nature soever. These *Forestallers* are an Unlawful sort of Traders. There will never be any *Good Market* for Truth as long as They are suffered. If therefore you sincerely intend to *Buy the Truth* (as the Wise Man adviseth) you have the Right Method set before you, and see that you hinder not this Excellent Mart.

CHAP. XI.

Stubborn Affections and Passions an other Hindrance of Truth. Namely, 1. Base Fear. 2. Affectation of Vain Glory. 3. Anger. 4. Undue Love. Several Kinds of it. 5. More especially Love of the World. 6. Ambition and Envy. 7. Pride. Particular Instances of it. 8. Levity and Unsettledness. Scepticism the usual effect of this. Monsieur Malebranche guilty of it. Received Truths voted Vulgar Errors by such Writers. Mr. Locke, and Mr. Toland censured. Bishop Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty Ninth Articles found to be too hovering. A brief Recapitulation of the foregoing Particulars.

THE Next thing which is a great Hindrance to Truth, and as great an Advancer of Error in Religion is Mens *Stubborn Passions and Extravagant Affections.* These Darken and Benight the Understanding, yea these cause Men even to Shut their Eyes against the Beams of Light. Their Affections deprave their Judgments, so that they make nothing of the most Convictive Arguments, and they bid defiance to Demonstrations. Now by these Extravagant Affections and Passions I mean these following things, which I will but briefly glance upon. 1. An

1. An *Undue and Exorbitant Fear*. And this Fear hath respect either to *God* or *Men*. As it refers to *God*, it is no other than *Superstition*: and I need not tell you that this hath been and is the Cause of Divers Unreasonable and False Opinions, and that it begets Wrong Notions of God and Religion. This is too apparent to be denied, or if it should, we could pour in abundant Instances from *Gentilism* and *Poperie* to make it good. But there is also an undue fear of *Men*, as well as of *God*, which is a great promoter of Error. This is a fear of their Anger and Displeasure, and nothing hath been more prejudicial to Truth than this. When *Adrian* disputed with *Favorinus* he seem'd to baffle him, but you know what the Philosopher told his Friends, he dared not dispute his best with the *Emperour*, it was adviseable to yield to Him who had Thirty Legions daily at his Command. Thus also it happeneth very often in Religion: Truth is baffled by Fear, Truth, which is Bold and Daring in It self (for though she be Naked she is not Ashamed) is frequently betray'd by Fearful and Cowardly Men. As we see in the Example of the *Traditores* in the Primitive times of the Church, who trudg'd to the Heathen Officers, and gave up their Christianity to save their Estates. There are some Timorous Souls that will embrace

embrace any Proposition if they be brow-beaten and threatned. They will part with Truth rather than with the Good Will of the Great Ones. Do but stiffly *Quo Warranto* these Men, and they'll soon deliver up this *Charter*. You may *Scare* them into Falshood when you please. Do with them as they do with *Juries* sometimes; Shut them up and Frighten them, and they will soon Agree on their Verdicts. Especially if a severer course be taken, and Military Execution be made use of, if they be lustily assaulted and bomb'd they'll presently surrender this Fort. But there is an other Race of Men who are of a better Heart and Courage, for they will not be Hectors or Fired out of the possession of Truth. They are none of those Mushrooms that are generated by such Thunder and Lightning, they are not Profelyted to any Party by Fear and Dread: nor are they guilty of such a Sneaking Temper as to comply with Error, and abandon the Truth to purchase the Good Will and Favour of any.

2. *Affectation of Vain Glory, Applause and Popularity* doth too often deliver Men up to Gross Errors and Delusions. This is generally joyn'd with the *Base Fear* I last mention'd, and is near akin to it. The Truth is perverted by many, that they may Take with their Hearers. They corrupt

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rupt and debauch Religion, that they may be Acceptable to those they deal with. To please the People, the Truth is disguised. This is to be reckon'd as an Other Cause of the Various Sects and Parties in Christendom. For though that of *Plutarch* be true, *"To Please the Multitude, is to Displease the Wise,"* yet such is the Vain Itch of Popularity that those who are Infected with it disregard the Esteem of the Wisest Men, and fondly hunt after the Good Word of the Weak and Ignorant : and for the Applause which they receive from them they Recompense them with Error and Falshood. But most commonly the Good Word of the Vulgar is not so much Courted as that of the Great and Rich, those that are in Place and Power : and when it is Thus, Truth is in great danger of being proscribed and discarded. So the Evangelist acquaints us, that *many who believed in Christ, dared not Confess him* (and with Him, Christianity it self) *because of the Pharisees, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue, for they Loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God,* John 12. 43, Ye hear therefore our Saviour Expostulating after this manner, *How can ye Believe that Receive Honour one of another,*
Joh.

* Τὸ τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀρεσκόν, τοῖς σοφοῖς ἰσὶ ἀταρεσκόν.
De Instic pueror.

Joh. 5. 44. As much as to say, it is impossible my Principles and Doctrines should be imbraced by you as long as you Affect Applause and Honour, as long as you pursue Worldly Fame and Repute; for whilst ye are Eager and Violent in following these you will certainly let go Evangelical Truth. This was seen afterwards in several betrayers of the Truth, and particularly in the *Arians*, who, as *Theodoret* observes, were * Servants of Ambition and Vain Glory. Here I add that *Flattery*, *Men-Pleasing*, and *Time-serving* are great Enemies of Truth, and will always be so. For if Men take up Principles only to comply with others, and stand prepared either to keep those Principles, or to take up New ones accordingly as the Times shall prove, it can't be imagin'd that these Persons will be long in the possession of Truth. No: it is Impossible, for a Temporizer cannot be a Friend of Truth. Therefore we must follow that Reverend Man Mr. *Mede* his Practice, who declareth (in one of his *Epistles* before his Writings) that *he never made the Bent of the Times the Rule of his Opinion*.

3. The Truth is unspeakably Prejudiced and Indanger'd by *Peevishness*, *Anger*, and

² φιλοτιμία καὶ κατὰ δόξαν διεσπασμένοι. Eccl. Hist. l. i. cap. 1.

and *Choler*. For these ruffle and disorder, yea and Blind the Mind, and cast a Mist before the Eye of Reason: and then it is no marvel that *Truth* is not seen and discern'd, and that Mistakes and Error go for Truth. If Anger be predominant, the Light of Knowledge will be intercepted, and Truth will be shut out of Doors. The Breasts of Cholerick and Passionate Men boil with Wrath and Anger, and therefore it is not likely that Truth will be the Companion of these Raging Fitts: yea, 'tis most probable that it will never enter into these Unquiet and Disturbed Souls. Which is not said to exclude a plain and warm Reflecting on the Antagonists willful Faults and Mis-carriages, and a zealous rebuking him for them, if there be occasion; for these are consistent with Calm Reasoning, and a Sedate Enquiry after Truth. But I only speak against a Passionate and Intemperate defending of the Cause, and such a furious falling upon the Adversary as makes a Man fly beyond the limits of Reason, and lose the Truth whilst he is in too hot a pursuit of it. This sort of Men are generally for bringing others to their Opinion by Force, being of that Inn-keepers humour whom *Plutarch* speaks of, who made all his Guests fit for his Beds,

for

for if they were too Long, he doctt them, that is, he cut them off by the Feet, if too Short, he stretcht them out. But this Violence is not the way to propagate Truth in Others, and it is a sign that they nourish it in Themselves. Again,

4ly. *Undue Love*, (as well as Anger and Hatred) is the Cause of Error in Religion. Thus some Persons, because through the Pregnancy of their Brains they have Brought forth a New Opinion, like True Parents they Love their Own Offspring, Hug their Own Brat, make much of their Own Creatures. This is no Uncommon thing, and we may frequently Observe these *Pignations* who fall in Love with their Own Workmanship, and Admire what Themselves have made. Indeed it is natural to Men to love themselves and their own Opinions, and from that Principle they hold them fast, and are thereby sometimes disabled from embracing those that are more eligible. Yea, and they would have Others to think as they do, for this is congenite to Men, they are desirous that others should be like them: thus the *Lacedemonians* pictured their very Gods in Armour because they were a Warlike People themselves. The Ancient *Tartars* thought their Chief God *Nasgai* had a Wife and Children, because they had such an esteem of Matrimony. Nay, this

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this reacheth to Things as well as Persons: the *Spanish Gallions* are built high, and are stately, and flow; that People would have even their *Ships* like themselves. This is the genius of Mankind: they affect their Like, and would have every thing resemble them, because they have a good Opinion of themselves.

But from *Self-Love* I pass to an undue Love of and regard to *Others*. Some are fondly Inamoured with the *Opinions* and *Placits* of *Others*, because they have a Kindness for the *Persons Themselves*. These resemble the Poet *Alcaeus* who they say fell in Love with a *Mole* on a Boy's body; they Love any thing for the Persons sake. So some tell us, a *Great Man* towards his Latter end brought back *Arius*, and favoured his Heresy on the account of his Sister *Constantia*. And *Theodosius* was Favourable to the *Eutychians* because he was much more so to his Spouse *Eudoxia*, who was a Patroness of them. And *Paul* of *Samosata*, Bishop of *Antioch*, to gratify the Princess *Zenobia*, who was enclined to *Judaism*, denied Christ's Divinity, and defended *Sabellius's* Doctrine.

There is an other sort of Love or *Charity* which, in the excess of it, breeds Error. This makes some Men *save all the World*, and at the same time endanger by that Opinion the Salvation of many. They
love

love all Religions, and would take them all in, if the thing were practicable. These, like *the Family of Love*, pretend an Universal Charity, they profess a Kindness to all Perswasions, and believe a Salvation in them all. Especially as to the *Papal* and *Reformed* way, they make but little difference. Of which number Mr. *Baxter* seems to have been in the latter part of his Life; he had a good Opinion of these of the *Roman* Communion as to their Doctrines of Faith, as he confesses himself.

* *The difference between them and us in these Points appears greater than it is: and in some of them it is next to none at all. And again, I doubt not but God hath many sanctified ones among them, who have received the true Doctrine of Christianity. And presently after, I can never believe that a Man may not be saved by that Religion which doth bring him to the true love of God, and to a heavenly Mind and Life. An high Encomium of the Roman Religion. Abundant Instances of this we have in Writers both Foreign and Domestick, whom if we peruse carefully and sound to the bottom, we shall find that at one time or other they favour all Parties and Perswasions: they speak well of them all, as they come in their way, and they are very good Friends to the Professors of all Opinions.* They

† His Life. Book 1. Part 1. p. 171.

They think that all that is well meant, is Good, and that one way of Religion is as eligible as an other, and that it is indifferent which a Man is of. These good-natured and loving Souls talk as favourably of Mahometism, Paganism, and Judaism as of Christianity, for they tell us that they all generally concenter in the necessary Duties of Religion, though they differ in some unnecessary Points.

Accordingly it is thought generally to be a *rude* and *ungentle* thing to expose an Error, and to speak freely against a prevailing Mistake, and a dangerous Opinion, and to animadvert on a designing Author. You must not treat them thus, they plead Exemption from such severe usage by virtue of the Laws of Civility and Good Humour. Yet 'tis observable that they had a very good Opinion of Doctor *S—th*, and Mr. *B—l* for their smart Performances against the Dean of St. Pauls and Doctor *Bentley*. They were extremely pleas'd to see these Learned Gentlemen exposed and ridiculed, and were wonderfully rejoiced to behold a second and third Edition of those bold Satyrs. So then it seems the pretences of these Men to *Decency* and *Civility*, and (which they much talk of) *Good Manners* are partial and trifling. You must ask them when you shall be witty and sharp on a Writer. It

appears that they do not think that all Railery is unfit and indecent, but only they would have it exercis'd towards some Men, and not others, especially not towards Mr. L. or Mr. T. and their Associates. But suppose that they were impartial in that which they call *Civility* and *Charity*, and were pleas'd to extend them to all alike, yet these Qualities, as they manage them, are but Mock-virtues, and are mere titles and shews. For it is not either *uncivil* or *uncharitable* to reprehend Errors, 'tis not ungenteel or favouring of ill Manners to use a great freedom here, which sometimes is absolutely necessary, and cannot be omitted without betraying the Truth. And as for the other Temper which they seem so much to doat upon, it is not Affability and Good Nature, as they stile it, but mere *Indifferency* and a *Sceptick Humour*. And Whilst they pretend to Civil Demeanor, and hold us in hand that they are against all Disputes in Religion, all Quarrels and Contests about the Articles of Belief, and that they are so kind and favourable to Mankind as not to embroil the World about Opinions, whilst they make this fair shew, they do really impose upon the World, for the design is not any such thing as Good Will and Peace, but an *Unconcernedness* for the Truths of Religion : which plainly appears

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appears from this, that they hold one Opinion to be as good as an other, and one way of Religion to be equal with the other, or rather all of them to be of no Moment and Concern. For if they sincerely thought otherwise, they would not discover such a Coldness and Indifferency as they do for some of the most considerable Doctrines in Christianity.

Again, the pretence of *Charity* here is groundless and impertinent, for our Charity is not to be the Standard of Theological Truths reveal'd in the Holy Scriptures; but it is to be regulated by these, which acquaint us that Charity must have its limits and boundaries, its due measures to act by; or else it is extravagant and unruly, and, to speak truly and properly, is not Charity, but Blind Affection and Fond Passion: and 'tis certain we ought not to determine concerning Divine Truths according to the Modle of these. We are to remember that there is a *deliberate Choice* to be made in Religion, and we must not embrace all that comes under that Notion, and think well of all Perswasions. Our Modest *Articles* are somewhat smart when they speak of this Matter, to shew of how great Moment it is; *They are to be had accursed who presume to say, Every Man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professes* (be it what it will)

So he frame his Life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature. 18th. Article. I might here insist on the Danger which accompanies the contrary Opinion and Practice, which is very Palpable and Notorious. For this *Catholicism* is the bane of Religion: this pretence to an *Extensive Love* to Mankind proves fatal to Truth. For though they are very inhumane and uncharitable who *damm all Men* that are not of their Opinion, yet those who *save all* of all Perswasions, notwithstanding they seem to be Good-natur'd, are the cruellest of the two: because under the colour of a gentle and loving Nature they foster Errors of all sorts: out of a Complying Humour they are ready to disclaim most of the Articles of Religion. Under the Name of *CATHOLICK CHRISTIANS*, and the Notion of *PEACEMAKERS* and *RECONCILERS* they endamage the Souls of Men, and hazard Christianity it self, and are the greatest advancers of Infidelity. I fear this may too truly be said of the Author of the late *Irenicum Magnum*, who pleads much for Peace and Union, but forgets that there is such a thing as Truth. He cries out against *Magisterial Determinations*, which, if we mean in a right Sense, I'm as much against as this Gentleman is, but his design is by them to exclude the most

most receiv'd and settled Doctrines of Christianity. He magnifies a *Latitude of Scripture*, but under that pretence, cramps the chief Points of Christianity contain'd in the Scripture. He declares himself an *Universal Christian*, but under that title he renounces a great part of our holy Religion, if I can Judge of his Undertaking. I am for the Judgment of *Charity* in its due Latitude, but by no means let us part with *Truth* out of a Principle of *Charity*. Let us not be over-sway'd by the affectation of Good Humour (as they call it) and obliging Behaviour to destroy the main Articles of the Evangelical Faith. Let us not be prevail'd with by an over-fond Kindness and Complaisance to abandon our Religion, let us not be such blind Zealots as to sacrifice this to Charity.

To proceed to another Particular, under this General Head, that particular kind of *Unlawful Love* which is known by the Name of *Lust* hath been yet a Greater Advancer of Falshood and a Hinderer of Truth. *Bernardinus Ochinus*, who was not content with One Wife at a time, but married Others, justified his Practise with his Pen, and writ in defence of *Polygamy*. Yea, Christianity must be discarded if this Passion thinks fit. So the People of the Kingdom of *Congo* abandoned the Christian Religion, which at first they

embraced, because Plurality of Wives was denied them, as * Sir *Walter Raleigh* informs us. Thus the *Sensual Man* (so the Word *luxuriosus* is translated in *Jam. 3. 15.* and *ver. 19.* of St. *Jude's* Epistle,) the Man given up to the Pleasures of this part of the Animal Life, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. by reason of the Prevalency of this blind Passion he shuts his Eyes against the Light. But I pass to an other Particular.

54. I will distinctly speak of *the Love of the World*, and shew that That doth palpably oppose *Truth*, and directly administers to Error. This is well represented to us by St. Paul in 1 Tim. 6. 10. *The Love of Money* (saith he) *is the root of all evil.* Which gives a General Account of the Mischief of Covetousness, but the Next Words acquaint you with the more PARTICULAR MISCHIEF it doth, for *while some have Coveted after Money, they have Erred* (saith he) *from the Faith*, they have forsaken the Truth of the Gospel, and have run into all manner of Heretical Delusions. Thus he tells us, that *Demas had forsaken Him* (and the Truth no doubt at the same time) *having loved this present World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10. An Immoderate Desire of Gain perverteth Mens Judgments, and blinds their Understandings. They usually

* Hist. of the World.

usually impose upon their Belief in a Case where Worldly Profit urgeth them hard. That Man is blind who sees not how Many Doctrines are framed merely by Interest, and maintain'd upon Secular Designs. I could Instance in some *Grand Cheats* which are built upon **GOLD** and **GAIN**, That especially which is pretended to be *built on a Rock*. Most of the *Roman Doctrines*, I mean such as are purely *Roman*, serve their Temporal Politick Ends, as those of *Indulgences*, *Purgatory*, and *Invocation of Saints*; and because they do so, they are maintain'd against clear Texts of Scripture, and the most Pregnant Reasons that can be brought. The Pope is enrich'd, and the Priests have a standing Revenue by this means, *by this craft they have their Wealth*, as *Demetrius* said in the like Case. Neither is it a thing to be conceal'd or disguis'd, that among the Retainers to the *Protestant Cause* there are not a few that prostitute Religion to Interest, and whilst they seem to be most Zealous for the former, carry on a Design for the latter wholly or chiefly. There are Mercenary Pens in the World, which are hired to falsify in Religion. And then you may imagine they will bestir themselves with great Vigour, and dash Ink with a mighty Concern. They will be sure to plead hard, and push the Cause on

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with the utmost advantage, when they know they are to have some part in the thing they plead and sue for. But this is the worst sort of *Champerty*, and certainly is very unlawful. Here I might further shew how Truth is impeded by a Servile dependance on Great Ones, which is occasion'd by an excessive valuing and pursuing of Worldly Advantage. And moreover I might make it appear that some Mens Promotions and Dignities, their High Advancements and Honours will not permit them to discern, or, if they discern, to reprove and check, and to animadvert upon the betrayers of Truth; these make them connive at some pernicious Errors and the Authors of them, and silently suffer them to spread and increase. All that I will say now is this, that it is to be Lamented that this Secular Interest bears sway even in the Religion of some Men, that several Articles of their Creed bear this Stamp upon them. And it ought to be our care that we make not our Belief truckle to our Avarice and Love of the World, that we sacrifice not *Truth* to so Unworthy and Sordid a Passion.

61. *Ambition, Envy and Discontent* (for I will range them Together because they are of so near affinity) plunge Men oftentimes into Errors of a heinous Nature. How many Instances have we of *Malecon-*
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tents that turn'd Hereticks? In the second Age of the Christian Church, *Valentine* who expected a Bishoprick, and missed of it, ran into the Heresy of the Gnosticks, and was one of the Principal Assertors of it, as *Tertullian* tells us in his Treatise against the *Valentinians*. And this very *Tertullian* (who makes this Remark upon him) did himself turn *Montanist* because he was not prefer'd to the Episcopal Dignity in *Carthage* which he sought after. Though * others say (and perhaps truly) that he was Exasperated by the *Roman* Clergy, and being of an Impatient Nature brooked not their Dislike of him: which made him fall off from their Communion. *Theobutes* upon a repulse of his request for the like Dignity did great harm in the Church by spreading Erroneous Doctrines, as *Eusebius* hath recorded in *Eccles. Hist. Book 4. Chap. 22.* *Epiphanius* saith the same of *Marcion*, in his Book against Heresies: and the like is related of *Montanus* by *Nicephorus* in his *Eccles. Hist. Book 4. Chap. 22.* *Arius*, a Priest of *Alexandria*, because *Alexander* was prefer'd to the Dignity of a Prelate in that City before him, turn'd a Professed Heretick, saith *Theodoret*, (though I confess some report that *Arius* might have been Bishop, but Refused that High Station, and pass'd it over to an other.) *St. Augustin* acquaints us that *Donatus* (his Country-

* Pamcl. in vlt. Tertul.

Country-man) was Displeas'd that *Cecilianus* was made Bishop of *Cartbage*, and there-upon declared his Dissent from the *African* Churches, and became a Notable Schismatick. *Eusebius* relates that *Novatus*, a Priest of *Rome*, sought after the Episcopal Honour, but fell short of it, and thence grew Discontented, and set up for a Heretick, and was the Father of those Missed People who were call'd *Cathari*. St. *Augustin* reports of *Aerius* that he revolted from the Catholick Communion, because he miss'd of the Bishoprick of *Sebastia*, which he had a great Mind to. So it is said when Mr. *Cartwright* was denied the Degree of Doctor of Divinity, before he went to see his Friends at *Geneva*, from that time forwards the Degrees of *Doctors*, yea and of *Maisters* and *Batchelours* were Voted Unlawful and Antichristian by him and some of his party. I will not Vouch all these Particular Narratives to be True, but leave them to depend on the Credit of the Relatours. Yea, for my part I verily believe that some of them, and particularly the two last, have no Foundation. This only I think I may safely affirm that some Mens Affectation of a Name and Eminency, or the Missing the Dignities and Honours they aspired to have been the Causes of Rash and Unsound Opinions, as well as the occasion of breaking the Churches

Churches Peace. Discontented Men are apt to shew their Displeasure, not to say Revenge, by striking at the Receiv'd Doctrines of the Church, and by substituting Others in their place, though with a *Non Obstante* to Law, Scripture and Reason: and yet it is pretended that these Falsities bear the inscription and impress of Truth upon them.

Here I might adjoyn, that it is as true, on the other side, that sometimes *Discontent* makes way for *Truth*: for, as was hinted before, Preferment and Favour stop Mens Mouths, and stifle that Truth which should issue thence: but when Persons are disobliged, they are apt to speak their Minds, they are free and open in their Words as well as Thoughts. St. *Jerom* (one of the most Learned and Pious Fathers) was displeas'd and slighted by most of the *Roman* Clergy, which rais'd his Passion sometimes, and made him deliver those bold Truths which otherwise he would have conceal'd. The like Cause will produce the same effect in some others, *i. e.* push them on to utter those necessary Verities which Flattery or Fear had before smother'd. But I shall say no more of this at present.

7ly. *Pride and Arrogance*, and *Self-Conceit* put a vile stop to the Attainment of *Truth*. When Persons are Highly Con-
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ceited of their Abilities, they are apt to be Singular in their Opinions, and to Think and Declare in a different manner from Others : yea, and if they be exasperated to defy all Mankind. There was one * *Campan* in *Luther's* time who publish'd a Book with this Title, *Against all that were and are in the World since the Apostle's time.* Their Business is to get into the Chair, and there to dictate Oracles, to thrust their Opinions upon all the World, and to turn the Scale to whatever side they take. They imagine that their Pen upon Paper is like the Princes Stamp in Coin, that it make it pass for Current : and they think every thing is Authentick by saying it is Theirs. These are the Men that make false Representations of things in the World, and strive thereby to hide the *Truth* from Mens Eyes. When they see occasion, they lend a very bad Character to those that deserve the Contrary, thus *Procopius* defamed *Justinian*, and the *Arians* aspers'd the other Party, and *Bolsec* blacken'd *Calvin*. Any Man may plainly see that the Haughty *Scaliger* in his *Exercitations* against *Cardan* asserts many things, and denies others merely to oppose *Cardan*. Who can think otherwise but that a Supercilious Humour of Contradicting, and running counter to
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the rest of the World moved the late *Critical Historian* to utter things so Improbable, so Groundless, so extravagant in themselves, so repugnant to the sober Sentiments of all Wise Men, so unworthy of the Divine Author of the Holy Scriptures? Who will not say that the same Principle inspired his Country-man, who hath also set up for a *Critick*, and hath given the World a sufficient taste of his bold Interpreting of Scripture?

Again, *Pride* as it is accompanied with *Boasting*, is found to be on that account the parent of Falshood. Thus the Fraternity of the *Rosy Cross* brag that the *Urim* and *Thummim* were made by their Art: they proclaim that they can make Mad-men and Fools Wise, and other such Instances of Romantick Vaunting fall from their Pens. And in *Divinity* there is as great Boasting: where *Pride* hath taken hold of the Man, there it may be said, according to the Jewish Proverb in the *Talmud*, he is like the Son of *Affai*, הוא כבן אפאי a Plucker up of Mountains, he brags he can Remove all Scruples, he can Resolve all Questions be they never so Difficult, he can Rive them be they never so Tough and Knotty. He labours hard, and with Industrious *Pride* hammers out Long Chains of Arguments, as if he would Captivate the Knowledge of all

all Nature. He satisfieth not himself with what is below, but peeps into an Other World, and ventures to tell you Exact Stories of the Polity of Angels, and all the Particulars of their Invisible Government. He undertakes to Determine the most Inaccessible Mysteries in Divinity, and wonders that any Man hath so little sagacity as not to comprehend them.

Further, the *Proud* Man is tickled with a Vain-glorious Humour, and affects nothing more than Praise and Acclamations; and this Temper of his hugely disposes him to be an advancer of Error and Falshood. For he knows that among some Men he shall be applauded for the Conceits which he starts, be they never so false. This makes him ambitious of exposing his Notions, and thereby giving a Specimen of his Wit and Invention. He sees that the broachers of New Opinions have had the fortune sometimes to be talk'd of and celebrated in the World, and therefore he strives to take the same way to get a Name, and to be Famous.

Moreover, *Pride* is conducing to Error on this Account, that it causes him to take up Resolutions to stand to his Opinions, and not to alter his Judgment. He hath suck'd in Absurd Principles, and he counts it disgraceful and dishonourable to abandon them. It was tolerably said by an
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Ingenious Author, * *It is pleasant to err on the better part,* but when he proceeds, he adds, † *This Error, if it be one, shall never be raviſh'd from me as long as I live,* he ſeems to diſcover ſomewhat of this Ill Principle I have been ſpeaking of. He reſolves he will believe what he hath ſaid and publiſh'd, and that he will always do ſo, he will die a Martyr for it. It is from the prevalence of an Arrogant Spirit that, if Perſons chance to meet with Convictions, they will not acknowledge them: they will not renounce a falſe Opinion, leſt they ſhould be thought to be Changlings. They adhere to Error becauſe they purpoſe to be Conſiſtent with themſelves. They think their Credit and Reputation lie at Stake, and therefore they will not relinquish the Cauſe which they have eſpouſed. With Pilate they are ſo ſtiff that they will not alter one Title of what they have written, or of what they have aſſerted. This unhappily puts them upon uſing all Indirect ways to uphold their Opinions. To this end they diſguiſe the Sentiments of thoſe that differ from them, and againſt whom they diſpute. They lie upon the catch, and ſtudy for matter of Cavil. They always repre-

* Theor. Tell. l. 3. Prælar.

† Hunc errorem, modo error ſit, nunquam mihi vivo eripi patiar. Ibid.

represent the Tenents of their Adversaries as Odious, and any thing else they will do in order to the keeping their own Post. For they can't indure to be baffled and run down, but they most passionately desire to have both themselves and their Opinions approved of. In short, they are ashamed to confess their Deficiency and Folly, and consequently they are bound to maintain their Errors.

This was the Source of Error and Mistake among the *Gentiles* of old. Self-Conceit and an Opinion of their Own Wisdom would not suffer them to acknowledge the Gospel when it was offered to them. This made the Heathen Philosophers laugh at Christianity, and look upon it as a System of Dull Notions, a Heap of Uncouth and Absurd Principles. And so among the *Jews*, this was it which Misted them. A Vain Perswasion that they only were in the Right, an Arrogant Conceit of their Own way miserably blinded and seduced them. And among *Christians* this hath proved as Mischievous, for it Imprisons Men in Darknes and Error, and will not suffer them to see the Light. *If any Man teach Otherwise, saith the Apostle, (i.e. if he be Erroneous or Heretical) and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is accord-*

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ing to Godliness, he is Proud, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4. If he perverteth the Sound Doctrine of Christ, and is a Ringleader of Error, he is a Man of an *Arrogant* and *Haughty* Spirit, let him pretend what he will: and This Spirit hath always been the fomentor of Error in the Church. All Wise Persons are convinced, and that by too General an Experience, that this is the Author of *Delusion*, whilst Men soar above the Regions which were design'd for them, and pry into things which are out of their Reach, or whilst they are so Conceited that they will not listen to the Holy Scriptures, (which are the Infalible Oracles of Truth) nor attend to the Judgment of the Wisest and Soberest Christians. This was the guise of the Old *Hereticks*, as One of the Antients describes them, * *They are all of them puff'd up with Pride, they all promise and pretend great Knowledge.* And another tells us, that this Vice is † *the Parent of their disorders, whilst they are always vaunting that they have a higher degree of Knowledge than others.* This makes them imagine, with *Simon* the Sorcerer, that they are some *Great ones*, and that all they say is

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* Omnes tument, omnes scientiam pollicentur. Tertull. de Præscript. adv. Hæc. cap. 41.

† Marem habeat sollicitatis suæ Superbiam, dum semper se scire altiora jactitant. Hieronym. in cap. 5. Osee.

Weighty and Important, and that none ought to swerve from their Dictates in the least. The mistaking but of a Letter destroys the World, say the *Rabins* of their *Jewish* Learning and Notions: and the same say these Men concerning their own Sentiments and Opinions, yea even at the same time when they are adulterating the true Sense of Scripture, and fasten unnatural and forced meanings upon it, and wrest the Language and Mind of the Holy Ghost, and in brief, make the Word of God speak what they please. Thus *Pride* is injurious to Truth, and not only hurries Men into Mistakes, but holds them in them.

8^{ly}. And Lastly, If I may be permitted to reckon *Levity* and *Unsettledness* among the *Vicious Affections* which Men are subject to, I would assign this temper as no small cause of Error. And indeed it is to be observ'd that this *Inconstancy* is even Natural to Mankind. Nothing is so fickle, so changing as Man. Before he comes into the World even in the Womb, he changes his Posture, and turns his heels quite upwards; as if by that early shifting he would give some presage of his unsteady Motion and Fickleness ever after. And truly he goes on as he began, he shews himself to be unstable and inconstant in every thing, like the Wind he stays in no quarter long, he is continually ranging

ging and seeking out, and then it is no wonder that Error is sprung, and that Truth is at a loss. *Scepticism* is the usual Companion of this slippery and inconstant humour; and this disposes Men to throw off all restraint, to claim exemption from all controul, and under the Notion of Free Thinking to lash out into any extravagant Opinions, and to run down all Sentiments that are commonly received, and chiefly because they are so; for their Business is to start new ones. The Gentlemen of this Genius delight in Paradoxes, and love to amuse the World with strange and surprizing Notions. A late French Writer (who is much in vogue with us of late) takes to this way very frequently: he tells us that * *Judging and Reasoning* are properly acts of the Will; which I believe no Man ever said before him. † *They who know how to perceive and reason (viz. with their Wills) do not believe that the Sun hath any light, saith he in another place. A little before he had said, Dirt hath as much Light as that. Again, in the same place he averrs that Musk and Amber are nothing else but Excrements, though by his leave I never heard before that Amber is an Excrement. Some of his Moral Notions are as odd; Morality changes according to places*

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* Malbranch. Search after Truth. Book I. chap. 2.

† Book I. chap. 19.

and times, [Treatise of Morality, p. 15. §. 7.] And several other such strictures there are which argue him to have too much of a *Sceptick*. I speak this the rather, because I find that many are enclined to imbibe this Gentlemans Notions with much greediness, and to swear to his Words as those of a Great Master. And even the Youth in the Academick Schools toss his Name from one to another with great Admiration. Not but that it is to be allowed that this Learned Writer hath brave and excellent flights, and very serviceable for the cultivating of Mens Minds, and therefore may be read with no mean Advantage: but I only caution (and I think I ought to do so in this Free Discourse of *Truth*) against what is unsafe in him, and what hath an immediate tendency to the unsettling of mens Thoughts about Religion, as well as Philosophy. I only remind the Reader that he gives too palpable Proofs of his being Sceptical; so that on that account he is not a fit Enquirer or Conductor into Truth. Monsieur *Poiret* in his *Cogitat. Rational.* hath gone a great way towards *Pyrrhonism*, whilst he maintains that Truth and Goodness are arbitrary. The like is upheld by *Cuper* in his *Arcan. Atheism.* who asserts that there is no Natural difference between Moral Good and Evil. *Charron* in his Book of *Wisdom* hath

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shew'd himself a great Naturalist and Sceptick, and calls all others *Pedants* and *Opiniators*.

We must be very careful how we converse with this sort of Writers, lest their plausible dictates unhinge us from those fix'd and stable Notions which are the basis of Truth, and lest they insensibly beget in us a desire of changing our Principles, and possess us with a Spirit of Giddiness all our Days. We are told by an Infallible Author that they are the * *unstable* (as well as the *unlearned*) that wrest the Scriptures. Inconstancy, no less than Ignorance, is the cause of misunderstanding the Holy Writings, and of abandoning the most substantial Doctrines of the Christian Faith, and of discarding the Antient and Primitive Truths. This makes them deride the True Faith once deliver'd to the Saints under the opprobrious name (as they account it) of *Orthodoxy*. This puts them upon brooding Novelties, and feeding the itching Ears of others with them. Whence we may gather why they so often profess themselves Enemies to *Systems*, as they call them, why the very mentioning of *Creeds* and *Confessions* kills them to the Heart. They cry out against these, that they may introduce a Scheme or Body of Divinity of their own framing.

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* 2 Pet. 3. 16.

They cry down the Old Articles which have been so long Current, with a design to coyn new ones in their stead. From this affectation of Novelty we see it is that persons are weary of the Commonly received Assertions, and look upon them with contempt and disdain. It is the way of some Men to damn a doctrine by only accusing it to be a *Vulgar Error*. When they have said this, they have said enough, they imagin: then a New Conceit, an Upstart Invention shall run down a Received Truth, although it be back'd by plain Evidence in Scripture, and the Testimony of the Learnedst Writers both Ancient and Modern, and by the Reason of the thing it self. Thus according to some the Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Christ's Satisfaction*, are *Vulgar Errors*, and are therefore laid aside as such. In the like manner a Learned Writer treats the Opinion concerning *Prodigies* and *Portentous Accidents*, which he represents as a Conceit taken up by the *Common People*, and therefore to be rejected by the Wise. And so he deals with that other Received Doctrine, that the *Pagan* Worshipers imitated the *Jews* in several Rites of their Religion, and that the Devil was God's Ape: which he condemns as a * *Vulgar Notion* and a *Trivial Saying*.

* De Leg, Hebr. l. 3. c. 4.

I appeal to any impartial Judgment which of these two is the most probable Opinion, which of them is to be most credited, *viz.* that that Curfed Fiend craftily imitated the Divine Being, or that the Divine Being imitated him. But we see what is the fruit of casting off Received Doctrines under the Notion and pretence of their being *Vulgar Errors*. It is certain that the like Practice in some others (not to judge the present Author) proceeds from that *Inconstancy* which I before mention'd, and which is one of the Causes of most of the New Errors wherewith we are accosted. They make nothing of Exploding an Assertion because it is Common and Vulgar, and because they are willing to broach a new one of their own.

The Authors of *Christianity not Myste-
rious* and of the *Reasonableness of Christiani-
ty as delivered in Scripture* are of this sort. The latter of these hath made a great advance this way by his setting up only One Fundamental Article of Christian Religion, by his ridiculing the Resurrection of the same Body, by his Scruples about the Souls Immateriality, by his Notion of Thinking Matter, by his No Natural Conscience, or any such Original Principle in Mens Minds. And both of them have endeavour'd to shake the Fundamentals of Religion by a New Set

of Notions about Reason and Clear Ideas, and the rise of these from Sensation and Reflection only, and their particular Con- ceits about Substances and Essences. I wish I could say with a * Learned Prelate of our Church that *these Notions were borrowed to serve other purposes than the Author intended them for*: but it too plainly appears, seeing this latter hath taken the part of an ill Generation of Men among us, (and seeing they have so strenuously taken his) that he designedly made way for what he now espouses, by those Notions of his. We may now perceive that they were contriv'd on purpose in favour of Socinianism and Scepticism. And accordingly starts up one that dextrously makes use of them, and particularly applies them to that end. For which reason that Reverend Prelate joyn'd them both together, and baffled them both at once.

I wish there were not occasion to complain that the late *Exposition of the Thirty Nine Articles* is Sceptical and hovering. And truly the Learned and Reverend Author was not ashamed to tell the World so; he lets them know that *he intends to observe an Indifference*, i. e. a Neutrality in his handling of those Doctrines, but why he calls it a *True Indifference*, I do not apprehend.

* Bishop of Worcester's Vicar. of the Trinity.

prehend, for where there is only *Ambiguity* and *Uncertainty*, there is no *Truth*. And he adds that this *Indifference* becomes one who undertakes to explain the *Doctrines* of the Church, and not his own. Which is somewhat strange, for I had thought the *Doctrines* of the Church had been, and ought to be the *Doctrines* of the Clergy, and so are properly their own. But that which at present I take notice of in this Learned Writer is that he hath made the *Articles* of our Church a *Nose of Wax*, and accordingly he bends and wrests them which way he pleases. Such a *Latitude* doth not only enervate all these *Articles*, but likewise all the *Canons*, and all the *Homilies* of the Church, and her *Catechism*, yea and her whole *Liturgy*, and the *Offices* appertaining to it. For if she doth not speak plain Sense, and so as she may be understood, in her *Articles*, what reason have we to think that she doth otherwise in the rest? And so not only the *Doctrine*, but the *Devotionals* and the *Discipline* of the Church of *England* are in the Clouds, and we are Ignorant what they are. According to this Learned Prelate we don't know the meaning of a great part of our *Articles*, and consequently they are of no Use, for what is unintelligible is so. And why then have all these *Articles* the Stamp of Regal Authority, why are they enjoyn'd

joyn'd to be subscrib'd by Act of Parliament, and are thereby incorporated into our *Laws*? Are we to think, notwithstanding this, that they are not to be understood?

Besides, This Worthy Author himself calls his Performance on the Articles an *Exposition* of them, which is the same with *Explaining* of them as every one will confess, but how can he be said to *explain* the Articles who endeavours to represent the Sense of them as *Ambiguous* and *Uncertain*? We shall be mightily oblig'd to his Lordship if he shall think fit to reconcile this difficulty, if not Contradiction. He professedly tells us in his Comment on the 17th Article, in way of Self-Commendation and Applause, as most think, *I have not on this occasion declar'd my own Opinion*, p. 169. And why then did his Lordship undertake to *expound* the Article? And what ground is there to boast that those who have read what he has said on this Article, can't tell what his Lordships Opinion is? for these are his Words in the Preface, *Those who knew my Opinion in the point of Predestination, have owned to me that they could not discover it by anything that I have written*. And yet he calls this an *Exposition*. I would know whether this be *Writing with exactness*, which this Reverend Author so often speaks

speaks of, and requires in others, and thinks himself Master of. By the same figure and mode of speaking he may give the title of *Exposition*, to the darkest of the *Delphick Oracles*.

Moreover, this way of dealing with the Articles seems to me to be a very severe Reflection on our first *Reformers*, the Pious and Learned Compilers of these Articles, as if they were not able to write or dictate Sense, or could not speak Grammatically and so as to be understood; or as if they purposely design'd Obscurity, and that even in some of the most considerable Points of our Religion; as if they studied to perplex Mens Minds, and ensnare their Consciences. Which naturally follows upon his Lordships manner of treating on some of the Articles.

Further, this way of handling the Articles of our Church seems to me (which I also submit to the Judgment of others) to allow of *Equivocating*, which is an intended and affected using of Words in speaking or writing which bear a double and doubtful sense: and the design of the Book some nice Men perhaps may think is to teach all Clergymen this Art, and, which is more, to makes us believe that the Church her self had this Design in her Articles, or at least in some of them. Now, what will Atheists and Libertines (with

(with whom our Age swarms, and against whom our Author hath sometimes warmly appear'd) say to this?

Again what pleasant and advantageous Reflections may be made on this Performance by those of the *Roman* Communion? Why may not they be permitted to interpret the *Articles* which concern *them*, after the same manner that the others are construed, that is, ambiguously and dubiously? And thus our *Articles* will come to speak the Sense of the Church of *Rome*, according to the Rules and Methods prescribed by this *Expositor*.

And yet further, why may not the *Socinians* and *Unitarians* by this artifice maintain their Cause? And though the very First *Article*, namely concerning Faith in the Sacred *Trinity*, was design'd against the Anti-Trinitarians, yet why may they not be permitted to snatch at some Terms and Expressions used there, and so to evade the whole drift of the *Article*? For if *other* *Articles* according to our Author, are to be interpreted in a dubious, yea a double Sense, then there is as much Reason that this should be so too, and that the Words should be strain'd to either Sense, *i. e.* either for or against the *Trinity*.

Lastly, if there be a double Acception of many of the most weighty *Articles*, and if this

this be consistent with the simplicity of our Church, and with the sincerity of its Ministers, who are to subscribe to them, it will be hard to reconcile this with *avoiding all Ambiguities*, which our *Canons* expressly enjoin in the matter of *Subscription*. Can. 36. And if our *Articles* be so doubtful and unintelligible as the Learned Prelate represents them, how is it true that *they were agreed upon by the whole Clergy in Convocation for the avoiding of diversities of Opinions*? Can. 5. Is affected *Ambiguity* the way to avoid *diversity of Opinions* in a Church? Surely this will not gain the suffrage of many Wise People. But I will say no more, only wish that the Freedom I have used already may not be offensive, seeing the *Truth* (as I conceive) required it of me, and seeing the particular Subject I am now insisting upon invited me to it. For affected Ambiguity and Uncertainty fall in directly with *Scepticism*: and especially in Matters of Religion, and more particularly in the Stated *Articles* of the Church they cannot but be of very ill and fatal Consequence. For these by degrees make way for Infidelity. If the Words and Expressions be voted doubtful and of uncertain Signification, the thing it self, the matter couched in them will soon be insignificant and vain. This Equivocating in Religion will at last introduce that

that higher sort of *Scepticism* which I have before touched upon, the Professors of which disparage all Reveald Religion, and make it their work to root up Foundations, and to cashier Old Truths, to vilify the Christian Theology, and to represent its Principles as flat and dull, and not worthy of the generous Thoughts of a *Deist*. To which purpose they amuse Men with New Notions in Religion, and fill their Heads with strange Ideas. They pass from one thing to another, but fix on nothing, because *Scepticism* hath no Principles.

But certainly those that are thus Desultory and Wavering are not capable of retaining *Truth* any considerable time. Wherefore the Apostle's Dehortation is very seasonable here, *that we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine,* Eph. 4. 13. That we may not be thus Tossed, let us take in sufficient Ballast into our Minds: let us be *Steady* and *Stable*, lest we suffer Shipwrack of Faith and Truth first, and then of a Good Conscience. Let us be Settled and Composed knowing that (as an Ancient Father saith, * a Lover of *Truth* hath need of Strength of

Ἀνὴρ ὁ ἀληθείας ἐραστὴς ἰσχυρὸς εἶναι δεῖ.
Alex. Strom. l. 7.

of Mind, a Resolved Tendency of Soul, a Fixed and Unmoveable Spirit.

Thus I have let you see briefly how Timorousness, Affectation of Vain Glory, Anger, Lust, Covetousness, Discontent, Pride, and last of all Levity, are the usual procurers of Error and Mistakes in Religion. It appears from the several Particulars that whilst Men labour under These Indispositions they are not like to find out Truth, or if they do find it, to Entertain and Embrace it.

And now from what hath been said you may learn the Way, the direct Way to Truth. You must rid your selves of all *Unruly and Disorderly Affections*. He that is a Slave to his Passions cannot be free in his searches after Truth. These naturally are the spring of unsound Reasonings, and consequently breed Mistakes and Delusions. You must *Fight with these Beasts*, if ever you hope to get the *Victory* over Error. You must abandon all Exorbitant Motions of Wrath, and Fear, and Self-Love, and Love of the World, and all other Impetuous and Head-strong Inclinations which are void of Sober Reason and Deliberation. These do all violently stop the Current of Truth, and will not suffer it to have any passage. More especially be careful to extirpate *Pride* and *Self-Conceit*, and be acted by
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Those Old Christian Graces which rendered the Primitive Saints so Eminent, *viz.* Humility and Meekness. Listen to that Lesson of Solomon, *Lean not to thine own Understanding*, Pro. 3. 4. Suspect thy Own Judgment: however be not Angry that Others will not entirely comply with it. Lay aside but so much of your Confidence as to Think that you may possibly Err: and be willing to part with any Opinion which you shall find to be Faulty. Freely Acknowledge your selves to be Convinced, when you are so. Study not Evasions, but Calmly yield your selves Captives, for it is no Disgrace to be Conquered when Truth gets the Victory; nay it is Honourable to be Overcome by Truth. Remember that Obstinacy and Arrogance lead to Folly, but the Best and Surest Guide of our Understandings is Humility, Profound Humility. If you be Meek and Submissive, you cannot miss of Truth: for God doth always Enlighten Humble Minds. The Apostles Advice then is Proper here, *Be not Wise in your own Conceits*, Rom. 12. 16. banish all Lofty Apprehensions of your own Abilities and Worth, subdue all Self-Will and Stubbornness. Study to follow Truth for its own sake, and resolve to imbrace it with all Sincerity, and without any reserve. If any Clear Conviction comes at any time, Receive it,
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and bid it wellcome. Prepare your selves for the Reception of Truth by avoiding Inordinate Passions, by being free from Disturbed Affections. This one thing will marvelotifly help you to Right and True Apprehensions of things in Religion, and secure you from all False and Absurd Principles.

CHAP. XII.

Negligence in searching after Truth is an other Cause of Error. Examination and Industry are necessary helps to Truth. The rather because there are so many Fabulous and Counterfeit Writings extant. Men voluntarily promote their own Mistakes by their want of Diligence. The Ancient Searchers after Truth were very Industrious. We must ask the Judgment and Advice of Others. Even of those that are of a different Profession from ourselves. We must take some Pains in examining of Words. Instances of this in inferior Matters. Other Instances of a higher Nature. Several Words have degenerated from their former Acception. It is folly to listen to the mere Sound of Words. We must use the Utmost Care and Pains to obtain Truth.

THE Next Great Cause of Error and Delusion in Religion is *Negligence in searching after Truth*. It is the Sentiment of the Ingenious *French* Philosopher that the faculty of Right Understanding and Judging is as Equally and Impartially distributed among Men as Any thing whatsoever in the whole World: and that the Diversity of Opinions is not because some Men are more Reasonable than others, but only because Men do not Apply their Faculties Alike, and do not direct their Thoughts the Same way. Therefore (as he adds) here lieth our Happiness to light on the Best Methods, and to choose the Right way that leads to Truth. Now in order to This there is need of Singular Care, Diligence and Circumspection. Here indeed All our Care and Industry must be employed: for Truth lieth in a Deep Pit, as *Democritus* rightly said. If we would Find it, we must search to the Bottom of it, we must cast off all Sloth and Idleness, and approve our selves to be very Active and Stirring Persons. Every Drouzy Enquirer cannot Reach and Fathom it. It is *Industry* in Thinking and Considering, in Examining and Trying that must help us to the purchase of it. We must be Cautious how we imbibe Principles, how we receive Notices

Notices into our Minds at first. Error is easily introduced before we are Aware. It will gain admittance and entertainment in our Judgments on a sudden if we be not very Circumspect. It is certain that the Temerity of Mans Mind is the Cause of most of the Errors he is incident to. He is Forward and Eager to take in Notions when they are propounded to him, and he receiveth them at a Venture. Men commonly miss of Truth by being Superficial, and Looking no further than the things that are just before them. Their Brains, like those of most *Insects* (as a Modern Philosopher observes) lie in their Eyes. They *Understand* no more than what they barely *See*. They go no farther than their Sense, and will not be persuaded to make use of the Piercing Eye of Reason. But if you enquire after Truth in good earnest you must be Industrious in Amassing together all the Right and Unprejudiced Apprehensions of Things that you are able; if you desire to understand Aright you must make frequent Reflections on Objects: you must behold them in their Several Situations and Postures, and by that means you will Distinctly discern what they are. The Sun and Stars appear Greater near the Horizon than in their Meridian. And thus it fares with Intellectual Objects, and those Doctrines

in Religion which we are to converse with. Oftentimes they are Different according to our Different View of them. We cannot attain to a Right and Adequate Knowledge of them at our First taking notice of them, and therefore it is best to Consider them Often, to behold them (if I may so say) in their Various Aspects, to understand the true differences of things. We must learn the Apostle's excellent Art of ** comparing Spiritual Things with Spiritual*. We must lay one thing against another, and by a diligent viewing of both, arrive to an exacter Knowledge of them. There is (as the Apostle saith) *† a proportion of Faith*, there is a certain *Analogy* between things in Divinity, and we are concern'd to study This, for this is one Rule and Measure of our Opinions as well as Practices. We must examin whether one Doctrine *answers* to another; if we find this, we may judge of one by the other. Let us then use great care in searching into the nature of things: let us learn to Scan every thing Exactly. The *Law bids us not Condemn a thing before it be Heard and Known*, said One that was a Master in Israel. It is certainly true of the *CHRISTIAN LAWS*; they suffer us not to *Refuse* any Doctrine till we have found upon *Strict Examination* that it ought

* 1 Cor. 2. 13.

† Rom. 12. 6.

ought to be rejected: and they permit us not to Receive any Doctrine unless we know upon Trial that it deserves our Approbation. Brethren, believe not every Spirit, but Try the Spirits whether they are of God, said St. John, Epist. 1. Chap. 4. Verse. 1. Caveat emptor is a Good Rule to be observed when we are upon Buying and Purchasing the Truth. Deal with Great Caution and Circumspection: have a Care what you do. You may easily Mistake; you may entertain Idle and Trifling Speculations, Fond and Imaginary Conceits for Substantial Truth.

Among Profane Writers there is a pack of *Fabulous* Authors, Greek and Latin, whose Writings have furnished the World with Egregious Falshoods. There are Few, or rather None who are so Plain and Honest as *Palaphatus*, who in the very * Title of his Book tells the World what he Writes, and that they must expect nothing from him but *Incredible* Tales and *Fabulous* Narratives. Those other Writers do not so, and therefore Readers have given Credit to them, which hath been the Occasion of fundy Errors in Philosophy, History, and other Faculties. So if you look among the *Ecclesiastick* and *Religious* Writers, there likewise we are Imposed upon, for (not to mention

the *Apostles Canons* and other Writings spoken of before) *Nicephorus, Calistus, Simeon, Metaphrastes, Sophronius, Cedrenus*, and some others are to be Suspected in many Places; and are confessed by the Learned to report things without ground. And as for the Writings of the *Fathers*, some of the Pieces which go under their Names were never made by them, but are Supposititious and Counterfeit (of which *Erasmus* hath given us a Particular List) and a late Industrious and Learned * Author hath set down certain Rules for the discerning of the True Ecclesiastical Writers from the Spurious. Besides, the Monks long ago committed many Faults in the Transcribing of the Manuscripts: there are False Copies and Imperfect Editions: and some of the Fathers Writings are Maimed by the Church of *Rome*, their *Expurgatory Index* having Lopp'd off part of them. Here is need then of Great Diligence, and Singular Care is to be taken that we may know how to discern the True from the False. And greater Care yet must be had lest we be imposed upon by Those who have Commented on the Fathers, and pretend to tell us their Sense, and what the Doctrines are which they present us with from the Scriptures. Look about you, for there are many Cheats and

* Dr. Cave Hist. Liter. in Prolegom.

and Counterfeits. Be so Incredulous as not to believe *All* to be *Truth*. Yea, remember that there are Many Lies and Falshoods for *One Truth*; therefore proceed with Great Care and Caution. It was Admirably said of *Seneca*, * “If we make our entrance into Temples in a very Composed manner, and are very Submissive in our Looks and Gestures when we are about to Sacrifice, we have Much more Reason to shew our Composedness and Modesty when we Discourse about the Heavenly Bodies, and the *Phænomena* belonging to them, when we entertain Disputes about the Nature of God and such Divine Matters, lest we should assert any thing Rashly, Impudently or Ignorantly, or lest we should Wittingly and Knowingly maintain a Falshood. If this Wariness was thought necessary in Enquiries about *Natural Religion*, undoubtedly there is a Greater Care to be taken by us when we are searching into the Exalted Mysteries of *Christianity*. We must Examine the things which relate to These with Great Exactness and Accuracy. Indeed *Athanasius* tells us of some Wild and Fantastick *Hereticks* who used to have This general-

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* Si intrant in templa compositi, si ad sacrificium accesserint vulgum submissum, &c. Nat. qu. st. l. 7. c. 30.

ly in their Mouths, that † Doctrines are to be received Simply and without any more ado: no Man is to examine whether they contain any thing Decorous or Indecorous. And particularly *Apelles* the Heretick gave this in charge to his Disciples and Followers, * that they should not examine his Doctrine and Principles, But This was the best Stratagem they could make use of for the introducing of False and Heretical Doctrines, and it was found by Experience to be very Successful.

But, on the contrary, if you have a Kindness for Truth, and would be in possession of it, you are Concern'd to be very Diligent in your searching after it. And if you ask how This Search and Examination are to be managed, I answer, by Those Standards which I have before mentioned, viz. *Reason* and *Scripture*, but especially by the latter. The *Bereans*, who received St. Paul's Doctrine, searched the Scriptures, to know whether those things were True. And we may observe that 'tis said they were † more Noble than those of *Thessalonica* upon that very account. It is a sign of a Brave, Generous and Noble Mind to make enquiry concerning

† Δίχεθα ἀπλῶς τὰ λεγόμενα, καὶ μὴ τοὺς ἐξετάζοντες ὅτι ἠγνοοῦν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ ἢ ἀρετῆς.

* Euseb. Eccles. Hist. l. 5. c. 13.

† Acts 17. 11.

ning the Truth, to search into it with all Care, and particularly to try it by the Holy Scriptures. Men of Worth and Generosity scorn to be imposed upon: and Christianity, if it be duly embraced and heartily espoused, will inspire us with such an excellent Principle that we shall delight to enquire into Truth, and nothing will be more grateful to us than such an Employment. But alas this is the thing which we have just cause to complain of, that Men are not induced with This Noble Spirit, but they are Narrow and Contracted, not Desirous to make farther Discoveries, not Industrious to search things to the bottom: yea, they seem to be Willing to be Deceived and Deceived. My Lord Verulam hath well observed that there is in the Common way of delivering of Sciences a kind of *Contract of Error* between the Deliverer and the Receiver: for the former Labours to dictate those things which may be most easily be believed, and the latter is greedy of Present Satisfaction, and so makes not a Sober and Industrious Enquiry into the things which are delivered. Hence proceed Error and Mistake. You cannot but take notice that it is the Fashion to receive some Doctrines of Course, and it is reckon'd want of Manners to suspect them. Opinions are handed from one to another,

other, and one Writer follows another, as *Theophylact* follows *St. Chrysostom*. It is thought too Bold and Daring an attempt to offer any thing against them: you must take them on Trust, and believe them with an Implicit Faith. How is it possible that some Men should come at Truth when they pursue it so Coldly and Faintly? How do some Persons Content themselves with Empty Forms of Knowledge, without any Power and Life of Truth in them? To These I may apply the Observation of that Noble Person before named, that Sciences when they are Peremptorily reduced into a Nice and Precise Model, receive afterwards small or no Augmentation. This is more especially true in *Divinity*, where when Points are brought to a Nice Form, there is no likelihood of a Proficiency in Truth. This cramps all Knowledge, and causes a wonderful Decay in Divine Learning. When a *Ne plus ultra* is Ingraven on the Pillar of Truth, as on those of *Hercules*, there must needs be a Stop to the finding out and discovering of many Excellent Notions. How faulty is the Christian World as to This Particular? Men study to be Formal in their Knowledge, and to Bound their Apprehensions: they stiffly Fix upon this or that Hypothesis, and then Bring all *Phænomena* to be solved by it, and they must be solved

solved by That Alone, whatever comes on it. They would have such a Scheme as they have taken up to be Acknowledged without Scruple, and to be as Undeniable as First Principles. To Enquire further, and much more to Determine Otherwise, is voted as a Rash and Insolent thing. And when you are Proceeding in your Enquiries, they endeavour to Retard and Discourage you, they fright you by crying out, *There is a Lion in the Way*, There are Insuperable Difficulties to be incountred with. Hereupon Men generally desist, and lay aside their Pursuits, and thus by their own Carelessness and Sloth, and (I may add) Willingness to be cheated out of Truth, they are Really and Indeed so.

But let not Generous and Manly Souls be thus deceived: let them call to Mind the Industry of the Ancient Lovers of Truth, which was discovered in their Long Journeys and Travels to find it. The Queen of Sheba came from the Remotest South to hear the Wisdom of Solomon: that Royal Princess undertook a Tedious Pilgrimage to acquire Learning and Knowledge. St. Jerom in his Epistle to Paulinus relates how Pythagoras visited the Egyptian Priests, and how Plato went among Them, and likewise among the Italians to inform himself in the Knowledge of

of Humane and Divine Things. *Philostrophus* in the Life of *Apollonius Tyanus* acquaints us that he travelled into *Persia*, *Scythia*, *Chaldea*, *Affyria*, *Arabia*, *India*, and other Countries to Improve his Knowledge. And indeed almost All the the First Wise Men, especially among the *Grecians*, used to make Long Voyages into *Egypt* and the *East*, to Survey those Countries, and first to Inform their Own Minds, and then to bring away their Profitable Arts and Sciences for the Good of Others, particularly of their Native Country. And These Persons truly were More Able to form Right Apprehensions of the Things they there observed, than those who were the Inhabitants of the Places. For Strangers observe more Diligently and Curiously all Publick Rites and Manners, as well as Opinions and Perswasions, than Those who dwell constantly on the Spot. And therefore (as an Instance of This) we may take notice that the *Greek* Authors (who generally travelled into *Italy*) write Best of the *Roman* History, and give the fullest account of the People and Customs. I speak these These Things in pursuance of what I am now treating of, viz. that a Great Indeavour to give our selves the Best Information we can is the Right Method for the attaining of Truth.

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Here particularly I would offer this (which I had before begun to mention when I discours'd of *Prejudice*) that we ought not to disdain the Counsel and Directions of any Persons, but that we ought to take some pains in consulting and attending to the Judgment of all whom we think to be able to instruct and inform us. This becomes that Freedom which Ingenuous Minds are always delighted in, and love to exercise towards one another. It is true the *Pagans* receiv'd the Answer of the *Oracles* of old without making Reply. *Papish* Devotion is dumb, and submits wholly to the dictates of the Priests, who would not have the Children to be Wiser and more knowing than their Parents. And there are other ranks of Men that labour to cramp and confine Knowledge, and thereby shew themselves no Friends of Truth, for this allows of free and ingenuous Conference, friendly minglings and impartings of Notions, and sometimes amicable debates and collisions, but with a sincere desire and intention to purchase Truth, and not Victory. This Freedom can't be maintain'd without listening to the Suggestions of Others upon occasion. Which is not unreasonable if we consider that the Looker on sees more than the Actor. A Man may sometimes survey a plot of Ground better
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at distance than those that stand upon it. A Pilot may learn somewhat from the Passenger. *Apelles* made the People his Judges and Censors, for he lay skulking behind his Picture-frames to hear what they said of his Pieces. This is not to be wonder'd at, because it is certain that some can in part Judge of things besides their Employment and Profession. There are some that are skill'd in other Faculties besides their own. *Briton*, Bishop of *Hereford* was one of the best Writers of the *Common Law*, and abundance of such Instances might be produced. We can't but observe that Men unlikely to understand or find out things, do so sometimes. The Admirable Art of Composing Letters and Printing was the device of a Soldier, not a Scholar. And (to answer that) Gunpowder and Guns were invented by a Frier. We should not therefore be backward to consult the Opinions of others, though of a different way of Employment from our selves, and exercis'd in other Matters. Clergy-men should not disdain to call in Lay-men to Judge of those things they treat of, for some of them are Masters of Good Learning, and others understand Good Sense, and can discern an Argument, though they are not stockt with Greek and Latin. We know there were some of the honest and religious

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Laity at the famous Council of Nice: nay, there were *Philosophers* present there, who were permitted to Dispute, and engage in the Controversies that were there handled: we read their Objections, and the Bishops Answers to them in *Gelasius Cizycenus's* Account of the Transactions of that Convention. Fit Persons then, though of different Ranks and Professions, may be admitted to Consultation, and to give their Opinion and Thoughts in Religious Debates, in matters that relate to the Christian Faith and Doctrine. And hear what the Famous *Civilian* saith, *We ought to believe a private Layman, if he speaks out of the Scriptures, rather than the Pope and a whole Council if they decree any thing without the Word of God. It is not improper then to have the Advice of Others, not of our own Rank, who, as such perhaps, in some cases, and at some junctures, may be more Impartial and Unprejudiced than our selves. We peruse the Excellent Writings of *Fagius, Mercer, Tilennus, Heinsius, Grotius* upon the Bible, though they were Lay-men; and by doing so we shew that we are not negligent in using the Means for the attaining of Truth.

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* Magis credendum Laico, si Scripturas adferat, quam Papæ & toti Concilio, si absq; Scripturas agant. Panormitana. de Elect. & Electi potestate. cap. significasti.

An other thing that I will suggest is this. In our search after Truth we must not neglect the *Meanest* things, nay, we must take some pains about *WORDS*; which convey the notices of Things to us. Persons oftentimes confound one thing with an other by not attending to the *Terms* by which they are express'd. There are Ambiguous Words, such as have a double Signification: and the not observing of this may lead us into great Mistakes. Terence uses the Words *odiosus*, *injuria*, *contumelia*, and others in a different way from other Writers. That *Cyrus* was said to be suckled by a *Beitch*, and *Romulus* nurs'd by a *Wolf*, may proceed from the Ambiguity of the Words, but it makes a considerable alteration in the Histories of those Persons. It is well known that *Benjamin* is call'd a *lad*, Gen. 43. 8. though he was a Married Man, and had Children, Gen. 46. 21. which shews the Latitude of the Hebrew Word. *Seraphim* denotes not only *fiery Serpents*, but *glorious Angels*, and thence there is some debate occasion'd about Num. 21. 6. and Isa. 6. 2, 6. St. John Baptist fed upon *Lobsters* in the Wilderness, say one or two Writers, because the Word *angustus* is sometimes used to signify that sort of Creatures: but the consulting of the Antient Usage clears the difficulty. Perhaps the

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controversy between the Peripateticks and Stoicks about the *Passions* was a strife of Words: it may be they did not agree about the Subject of the Question, the former understanding by *PASSIONS* the natural motions and fallies of the Soul, the latter the unnatural and disorderly ones only, such as disturb the Reason and Judgment. But in higher and more indubitable Instances I will shew that Men catch at *Names* of things, and so pervert the things themselves by that means. The *Eucharist* was antiently call'd a *Sacrifice*, whence those of the Church of *Rome* infer that it is a *Proper Sacrifice*, and that this was the meaning of the *Fathers* in their Writings. We read that *Confession* was practis'd in the first Ages of Christ's Church, but it was no such thing as is enjoyn'd at this day by the Popish Priests, and therefore here is a mistake of the Word. *Purgatory* or a *purging Fire* is mention'd in some Writers of the Antient Church, but it is not to be understood of the thing which the Church of *Rome* holds. *Praying for the dead* was used of old, but generally it was of an other Nature than what the *Roman* Devotionists practise, and therefore they can't from that way of speaking justify their praying for the delivering of Souls out of *Purgatory*. And so as to *Offerings* or *Oblations*, &c.

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which occur in *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, and other Ecclesiastical Writers, it might be shew'd that the *Roman* Doctors misunderstand the *Words*, and thence draw false Deductions. The Excellent *Sillingfleet* on this occasion makes this useful observation, *Nothing hath been a more fruitful mother of Mistakes and Errors than when under the same Name, something far different from what was primarily intended by the use of the Word, is set forth to us.* *Irenic.* part. 2. chap. 6. He instances in *Missa*, which was a good innocent Word of old, and in the *Christian* Writers signifies the *Publick Service* of the Church: but lately it signifies the *Sacrifice of the Altar*: and accordingly when the Doctors of the *Roman Church* find the Word in Antient Writings, they conclude that the *Sacrifice of the Altar* (as they call it) is meant by it. So he instances in *ἀνέστη*, which because the Papists have applied to that Sacrifice, therefore when they meet with that Word in Scripture, they are so silly as to appropriate it to the *Masse*. And many more Examples might be given of this kind. There are several Writers that found an Argument, and sometimes a whole Discourse on a bare *Term* or *Phrase*, as it is wrongly taken and applied: and the reason is because they give not themselves time to consider the different meaning of Words. This being
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so Common a Fault, we ought to be the more careful to redress it. We must not argue from mere Words to Things themselves, because we know the former are variously to be understood sometimes, and differently to be interpreted.

And here it might be observ'd that several Words have by a general Use and Custom degenerated from their former acception and meaning. Thus the Hebrew *Saris*, which at first signified an *Eunuch*, afterwards denoted any Great Man or Officer at Court, and so the Word is generally taken in Scripture, because heretofore in the *Eastern* Empires the Ministers and Principal Officers in the Household of Princes were of that sort. So in the *Greek* and *Latin* Tongue many Words fall from their primitive meaning; as *θεωλατρία*, which was primarily and properly a worshiping of *Demons* (a sort of Middle Deities, or, as others fancied, Souls of deceased Heroes) but afterwards came to signify too great Preciseness and Anxiousness in Devotion, or, in one Word, *Superstition*. *παράσιτος* a *Parasite* was a good Word of old, but in time began to be alter'd in its Signification, and to be used in a bad Sense. *Ἀκαδημία* or *Ἀκαδημία* was an antient School in *Athens*, but now *Academia* is become the general name of all Universities and Schools of Learning

We retain the old Word *Tabellarius*, a Letter-Carrier, though there is no reason for it, for they writ heretofore on little Tables or Boards cover'd over with Wax, but we have none of these Waxen Tables now, and yet from these the Letter-Carrier hath his Name still. *Papa* was a Name at first common to all Bishops and Spiritual Fathers, but afterwards it chang'd from its pristine Use, and was applied to the *Pope* only. So the Words *liber*, *codex*, *papyrus*, and the English *paper* are Words that are wrongly made use of at this Day, for we have no such things, properly speaking, among us. *Pyxis* (from *πίξ* *buxus*) and so our English *box* are applied to that which is not made of *box*, but of any other Matter. *Fagots* were heretofore made generally of breach, *fagus*: but now they are call'd *fagots* of whatever Tree they are made. So in *French* and other Modern Languages it might be shew'd that Words are commonly perverted from their antient and proper Use. Therefore, as I said before, we cannot argue from the Sound of Words, for Words alter, and the Names of things remain when the things themselves are gone. Here then we ought to be very cautious, as knowing that it is folly to take Words promiscuously, and to listen only to the sound of them. After this
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rate, when we read in * *Homer* the Word *ἐπισκοπος*, we may infer that there were *Bishops* in his time. Nay, because that Poet calls *Hector* † *ἐπισκοπον*, therefore we may conclude he was of that Order, and that *Episcopacy* is as old as the *Trojan War*. If the mere Word will carry it, then because we find that *Eden* is a great River in *Westmorland*, we may conclude that *Paradise* was there. And so in Scripture we read that *Huldah dwelt in Jerusalem in the College*, 2 Kings 22. 14. but will you thence gather that there were then such Societies and Structures as bear the name of *Colleges* at this Day? There is mention of such a Man as *Hul*, Gen. 10. 23. but will you undertake thence to prove that he gave Denomination to a place so call'd in *Yorkshire*? If we were to attend to the bare sound of Words, a Trifler might prove that *Homer* and *Æneas* are mention'd in the Sacred Writings (*Isa. 5. 10. Acts 9. 34.*) as well as the Prophane: we might prove that *Duke D' Alva* and the *Jesuites* (Gen. 36. 40. Num. 26. 44.) were in being a long time before they ever were.

These things I particularize in to shew the Usefulness of the Rule which I laid down, viz. that we must not be careless about the *Least* things, that we must ex-

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amine even the force of *Words*, and not be imposed upon by them. We must not (as many do) lay the great stress on Phrases and bare Expressions, not giving sufficient heed to the true Purport of them. To which belongs that useful Rule of *Tertullian*, speaking concerning the interpreting of Scripture, * I would advise you, saith he, to inure your self to mind rather the Sense, and the Thing it self, than the sound of the Words. And the reason is because several Words are Doubtful, and different things are meant by them, and therefore there is a necessity of scanning this Difference. And so on the contrary, there may be the same Notions, and yet not express'd by the same Words. It happens that there are different Terms for the same thing. And so Men mistake things not only because they are *Alike* as to the Words that express them, but because they are *not Alike* on that account. Things may be the same, and yet appear to be otherwise by reason of the Variety of Phrases whereby they are set forth. But if a Man should deny them to be the same because they are not cloathed in the same Words, he may as reasonably deny that a *Bill*, a *Libel*, and a *Declaration* are terms to signify the

* Malo te ad sensum quam ad sonum vocabuli exercere.
Tertul. adv. Prax. cap. 3.

the same thing in different Courts, viz. of *Chancery*, *Civil Law*, and *Common Law*. This may serve to caution us about the Acception of Words in other Matters of an higher nature. We must use great Attention, or else we shall miscarry.

And (to draw towards a Conclusion of this part of my Discourse) we must apply our selves to a General Enquiry and Diligence, we must make use of all Arts and Ways. There are some *Mean* things which we must not disdain, and there are some Attempts we must expect will prove Unsuccessful, but this should not discourage us. The *Royal Society* is not disparaged by the miscarriage of the *Double-keel'd Ship* invented by Sir *William Petty*, one of their Fellows. As in *Philosophy* a Free *Virtuoso* uses all laudable Methods to acquaint himself with the true powers of Nature and of Art, so in the Researches and Studies which relate to *Divinity* all generous Minds betake themselves in good earnest to whatever way they think may conduce to so great and noble an End as the purchasing of *Truth*, which they can't expect to do without great Pains and Industry. How do you *Chymists* Labour and Toil, Sweat and Blow to gain their Beloved Metal? and many of them sooner find their Grave-Stone than that which they stile the Philosophers. How do Men

spend themselves, and lose their Ease for the Attainments of Learning? how soon do they rise, and how late do they go to bed to make themselves Masters of some Gainful and Useful Knowledge? And shall *Religion* and *Christianity* have no Laborious Attendants and Students? why do not Men pursue Divine Truths with the warmest Vigour and Zeal, with an unwearied Patience and Labour, especially when in a short time they might compass this Work, and then sit down and Rejoyce in the Blessed Acquisition? Be Incouraged then to set about This Task: neglect no Study and Pains. Be content to undergo this Pious Drudgery: deliberately and calmly examine all Circumstances, canvase the whole Matter, bring every thing to the Test, fathom it to the bottom. Be Impartial in your Search, be Sincere in your Endeavours: when you Meditate, do it with serious Animadversion: when you Hear, do it with great Attention: when you Read observe the Rule which a Person before quoted hath given, * *Read not to Contradict and Confute, nor to Believe and Take for granted, nor to find Talk and Discourse, but to Weigh and Consider.* Practise this Rule, and you cannot miscarry. Ponder and Examine things with great Deliberation, because sometimes

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* Lord Bacon's Essay of Studies.

Truth and Error are close together, you must be at the Pains to untwist them. Because they are by some Mens folly mingled together, you must take care to garble and sift them well. It is observ'd by a Judicious Writer, that *there is no Error but hath its nutriment from Truth, in whose root it is engrafted, like a wild plant in a natural stock.* Dr. Jackson, Vol. 1. Book. 3. Chap. 48. Therefore there is need of extraordinary care and study to distinguish these Two in some Cases. We must be very exact here, and not content our selves with beholding the bare Surface of things, but Penetrate into them. Come up Close to Objects, have an Intimate Converse with them, and Prie Narrowly into them. Finally perswade your selves of This that *Truth* is never gain'd but by *Great Industry*: but Those Opinions and Doctrines are always *False and Erroneous* which have *Ignorance and Laziness* for their Parents,

CHAP. XIII.

A Vitious Life promotes Error. This proved from Scripture. From Reason. An Objection against it answer'd. From the Just Judgment of God. A Godly Life advanceth Truth. This proved from the Old and New Testament. From the Nature of the Thing it self. From the Particular Blessing of God. The Application of this. Feruent Prayer a Proper Means to gain Truth. What Encouragement we have to Pray.

Lastly. **A** Wilful persisting in the Love and Practise of Sin is an Undoubted Cause of Error; and on the contrary, a Godly and Upright Life conduceth both to the purchasing and preserving of Truth. These Two things then I will Distinctly prove, 1. That a Vitious Life promoteth Error, 2. That a Godly Life advanceth Truth.

1. Vice promoteth Error, And This I will make good from Scripture, from Reason, and from the Just Judgment of God.

1. This is evident from Scripture. *Evil Men understand not Judgment*, saith Solomon, Prov. 28. 5. their Minds are depraved and corrupted by Vitious Practises, and thereby are prepared for the reception of Error

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Error, but they are not in a capacity to receive and entertain, no not to judge of Truth. * *Why do ye not understand my speech?* saith our Saviour to the Wicked Jews: and he answers the Question himself, *Even because ye cannot hear my Word,* i. e. obey it. They would not, they could not by reason of their long Habit of Vice obey Christ's Word, and thence they could not understand what he said. Their Understandings were hindred by their Wills. The Apostle tells us of some who *put away a Good Conscience, and concerning Faith made Shipwrack,* 1 Tim. 1. 19. These two go together. He that makes No Conscience of his ways, will soon bid adieu to Faith and all the Substantial Articles of it. And of the same sort of Men the Apostle speaketh to the like purpose, but more Plainly in 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. where he lets us know that *their Departing from the Faith, and giving heed to Seducing Spirits and Doctrines of Devils* was the effect of *having their Consciences seared with a hot Iron,* i. e. of their Acting against their Consciences, and continuing in their Sins without Sense and Remorse. Men are seduced into the Worst of Errors, and entertain the most Hellish Doctrines by indulging themselves in Lewd and Prophane Practises. Men lose their Good and Whole-

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* John 8. 43.

som Principles by a Disorderly and Viti-
 ous Life. Trip up a Mans Heels, and his
 Head will soon come to the Ground. When
 Mens Ways are disordered when they
 cease to Walk and Act religiously, you
 shall presently see them falter in their
 Notions of Religion. This is implied in
 2 Tim. 3. 6. where the Apostle relates
 how it is the guise of Seducers and False
 Teachers *to lead captive silly Women*, i. e.
 to Pervert them with their False Do-
 ctrines: but with all he acquaints us that
 these Seduced Souls were *laden with Sins,*
and led away with divers Lusts; their Sins
 and Lusts prepared them for Error, and
 caus'd them to be Captivated by the per-
 nicious Doctrines of those Seducers. This
 is further attested by the same Apostle in
 2 Tim. 4. 3. *The time will come* (saith he)
when they will not indure Sound Doctrine,
 i. e. they will be running into *Unsound*
and Erroneous Opinions: and if you would
 know the Source of it, he discovers it in
 the next Words, *after their own Lusts shall*
they heap to themselves Teachers, i. e. their
 Lusts which hurry them on to Wicked
 Practises, will make them throw off their
 former Teachers; and Attend to such on-
 ly who are of Debauched Notions and
 Principles. It is no wonder then that the
 Apostle adds in the Verse following, *they*
shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and
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shall be turned unto Fables: they shall not indure to hear the wholesome Doctrine of the Gospel, they shall abandon the Evangelical Truth, and delight in nothing but Lies and Fables.

2. This is evident from Reason as well as Scripture. In the very Nature of the thing it self it must be so. For Irreligion and Profaneness Indispose Men for the very Reception of Divine and Spiritual Dictates. The Depravation and Pollution of the Life do Intercept the Beams of Spiritual Light. *Into a Malitious Soul Wisdom shall not Enter*, saith the Apocryphal Writer, *Wisd. 1. 4.* For the Entrance of *Wisdom* is made by Calm and Peaceable Thoughts, by Purity of Heart, by Sincerity of Mind, and by a Love of Wisdom and Tuth. But none of these are to be found in a Man of a Vicious and Wicked Life: therefore it is Impossible *Wisdom* and *Truth* should so much as *Enter* into his Breast, and consequently he lies open to *Error* and *Delusion*. Or suppose These found Entrance, yet they cannot Stay there: for it is well suggested by the foresaid Author, that *Wickedness altereth the Understanding*, *Wisd. 4. 11.* Sensuality depraveth the Reason, and a Perverse Will corrupteth the Judgment. Vice begets Error, because it Debaucheth a Mans Mind, and Sullieth and Obscureth
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yea even Blindeth the Understanding. Sin and Iniquity do violence to the Soul, and distort its Notions, and dull and besot its Apprehensions, and even stifle and devour its Reasonings. Hence it cannot but follow that a Wicked Life is the root of Ignorance and Mistakes, and directly leads to Error and Falshood. This I will further prove from this Consideration, *viz.* That what Men Passionately Love they will defend with Arguments, and they are Unwilling to Understand what makes Against them. Now Vice being the thing which they Love, and Virtue that which they think makes Against them, they must needs Argue strongly for the former, and strive to be Ignorant of the Reasonableness of the latter. In pursuance of This they Close their Eyes against the Light, and choose Darknes and Blindness. *This and the Reason of it were Observed by our Blessed Saviour long ago, Men love darknes (saith he) rather than light, because their deeds are evil: for every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd,* John 3. 20. They are (as Tertullian stiles Hereticks) *Lucifuge*, Persons that fly from the Light, especially that of Scripture. They with great Study wrest the Holy Writ, that it may serve their Lusts and favour their Ungodly Acti-

ons. They slight, they renounce, they defy not only the Principles of Christianity but of Reason. The Vicious Lives of some Men forbid them to assert and own a *God*, because such a Doctrine is absolutely against their Interest. If they should believe a *God*, they might thence gather that he will Severely Punish them for their Profligate Lives: but *This* they are unwilling to credit, and therefore they disbelieve That likewise. This Infidelity must be maintained mauger all Reason and Sense to the contrary. An Atheist will hold that this Fair Fabrick of the World arose out of a Casual Jumble of Atoms, and that those Atoms gave Existence to Themselves; or any thing else, though never so Absurd and Ridiculous, will he averr rather than own such a Being as can and will call him to an Account for his Wicked Practises. This is the Man who makes a Droll of Religion, and against all Reason and Argument defends his Folly, and yet at the same time he pretends to be Master of Greater Reason than other Men. You see by this what a Vitious Life will do. This Scoffer (like those * *St. Peter* speaks of) *walks after his own Lusts*; his Lewd Practises uphold him in his Atheistical Principles. His Vices deprave his Understanding, his Loose Conversati-

on is the Cause of his Perverse Opinion.

But it may be *Objected* here that several Arch-Heriticks, False Teachers and Apostates have been observed to be very Pious and Innocent in their Lives, as *Montanus* and *Pelagius* themselves, the *Novatians*, *Donatists*, the *Encratites*. And as it was thus of old, so since some *Anabaptists*, *Quakers* and others of very ill Principles have been known to have been very honest, upright and blameless in their Manners. The Answer to which is, 1. That it was a *Preciseness*, rather than a well-grounded Innocence, that was observable in *some* of those mentioned in the *Objecti-*
on. In some things they were too rigid, and over-strict, as in their abstaining altogether from Women, in their severe Fastings, &c. 2. We have ground to believe concerning some of them that their Harmless lives were but a Cloak for their Errors. Their Abstinence and Mortification were made use of to render them more capable to deceive others. As we know the worst of the Infernal Spirits put on the shape of *Angels of Light*, that they may the more advantageously do harm. 3. I am ready to grant that *some few* of those Persons that have been Heretically disposed were Good and Virtuous Men as to the Main, the Grace of God so influencing on their Hearts that the badness of those Doctrines, which

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which they had for a time imbibed, was not able to infect their Lives, and stain their Conversations and Practices. But 4ly, it cannot be denied that it was otherwise with the generality of those Men. It is evident from unquestionable Records that the greatest numbers of Heretical Teachers and Seducers were noted for some Moral Turpitude. We are told that *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* lost their Faith, made Shipwrack of it, by putting away a Good Conscience, 1 Tim. i. 20. The *Corinthians* and *Nicolaitans*, who set up New Sects, introduced the most bestial Parts of Heathenism. The *Gnosticks* were addicted to all lewdness, wantonness, and incontinence, as *Irenaeus* and others observe of them. Nay, St. *Jerom* tells us that this was a Vice in common to most Hereticks, and that it was Hard to find one who was not guilty in this kind. But though there were some that were not, yet the greatest part was always infamous, either for that or some other Immorality. *Eusebius* attests this of the *Montanists*, *Tertullian* the like of *Apelles*, *Hermogenes* and *Marcion*, *Clement Alexandrinus* of the *Carpocratians*, and *Cyprian* of the Hereticks of his time. And in succeeding Ages the like was taken notice of, as the Writings which are now Extant assure us. And this is partly to be resolved into that which I have been

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speaking of, viz. that Evil Principles are naturally introduced by Evil Practices. An unholy Life will produce Error and Heresy. For the irregular and enormous Motions of the Will extinguish the light of the Understanding, or obscure and darken it. Vice entertain'd in the Mind lays all the active Principles of it asleep; and thence such Men must needs tamely submit their Understandings to the Dominion of their Lusts. And indeed who can expect any other thing? for if a Man resolves to lead a Wicked Life, what is he concern'd in any Articles of Faith? In his Works and Actions he denys God, and will he not do the same in his Words? Hence it follows that Error and Vice must go together.

3. This happens to be thus by the *Just Judgment of God*. So the Apostle ascertains us that because the *Gentiles*, notwithstanding their Light and Knowledge, gave themselves up to Idolatry and all manner of Lewdness and Wickedness, therefore *God gave them over to a Reprobate Mind*, or (as the Original Word properly signifieth) *a Mind void of Judgment*, Rom. i. 28. They Sinned so long that they could not at last discern between Truth and Falshood, between Right and Wrong. This was the Just Recompence from God of their Hardned Folly.

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The Just Judge oftentimes punisheth Sin with Sin, giving Men up to Satan to be blinded and hardened, that those who wilfully refuse to Acknowledge the Truth and to Practise according to it, may give Credit to the most palpable Lies and Falshoods, and so perish eternally. The same may be gather'd from what is said concerning the Deluded Sinners of the Last Times, in 2 Thes. 2. 11, 12. *For this cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in Unrighteousness.* Hence it is manifest that Sinning against Truth, already known and believed, is the occasion oftentimes of being led by God into Delusions and false Perswasions. Hence it is evident that Sin is the road to Blindness, that Error is the Punishment of a Wicked Life. Those who are wilfully bent against the Truth, and take Pleasure in Unrighteousness, are Judiciously given over by God to entertain the vilest Errors and Impostures; a *Strong* or * *Efficacious Delusion* shall seize them. And thus I have succinctly proved what I first undertook, viz. that Vice promoteth Error. Unpurged Hearts and Unsound Heads go together. A Wicked Life destroyeth Good Principles. Which is a Notion so Plain and Obvious

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* *Επίγνῶσις πλάνης.*

that the *Pagan* Moralists were sensible of it, and freely acknowledged it, as might be made apparent by producing their Express * Testimony concerning this matter. But I hasten to the Next thing which I undertook.

II. I am to prove that as a Wicked Life leads Men into Error, so a Godly Life and Practice advance Truth, and Rectify Mens Notions and Speculations. This I found,
1. Upon *Scripture*. 2. Upon the *Reason of the Thing*. 3. On the *Blessing of God*.

1. We are assured by the Scriptures of Truth that Holiness is the best guide of Rational Faculties, and that we shall have Farther Discoveries of what is True and Right if we Live according to those things we know. I will begin with the Psalmists Words in *Psal. 111. 10. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, a Holy Life is the way to Heavenly Wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments, keeping of God's Laws and living uprightly do very much conduce to the enlightning of the Mind and clearing the Understanding. And This he declareth from His Own Experience, Psal. 119. 100. I understand More than the Antients because I keep thy Precepts. I have (saith he) arrived to Greater Knowledge than those who far exceed me in Years,*

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and I must in a great Measure impute it to my Conscientious observing the Laws of God. Nay, he assureth us in *Psalme 25. 14.* that *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant.* Those who truly fear God and walk in his Ways shall be blessed with Extraordinary Communications of Truth. If there be any *Secrets* and *Mysteries* which are useful for them, they shall be acquainted with them, and the Covenant of Life and Salvation, which contains the greatest *Secrets* and *Mysteries* imaginable, shall be unlock'd to them: they shall be permitted to look into the *Ark*, they shall be honoured with wonderful Discoveries, and their Understandings shall be illuminated in a way different from other Persons. *Solomon* goes higher, and lets us know that *they that Seek the Lord understand ALL things*, *Prov. 28. 5.* There is No part of Knowledge whatsoever, that may be any way Useful to them, shall be kept from them. *Daniel* (an other Inspired Penman of Scripture) joyneth These Two together, *TURNING from our INIQUITIES and UNDERSTANDING THE TRUTH*, (*Dan. 9. 13.*) and thereby informeth us that the Understanding of God's Will and all Saving Truth is the Companion of hearty Repentance and a Godly Life. And again, speaking of the great Mysteries

which were to be Revealed in a short time, he saith that *None of the Wicked shall understand them, but the Wise* (who are Opposed here to the *Wicked*, and therefore are the *Godly*) *shall understand*, Dan. 12. 10. Let us pass to the Scriptures of the New Testament, and there if you consult John 7. 17. you will find Those Words an Evident Proof of this matter, *If any Man will Do his (i. e. Gods) will, he shall Know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* Let a Man seriously set himself to the Practice of Religion, and he shall certainly have a Clear Insight into the Doctrine of it. And This seems to be our Saviour's Meaning when he saith, *He that followeth me shall not walk in Darkness, but shall have the Light of Life*, John 8. 12. He that Liveth according to my Laws and Precepts (that is *Following* of Christ) shall be truly Enlightned with all Spiritual Knowledge that is necessary to Life and Happiness. His Practice shall advance his Knowing of God's Will. And This may be the import of Christs Words in John 8. 31. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed: and ye shall Know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.* They that Practice what is delivered to them by Christ in his Word (for That is *Continuing in his Word*) shall be *Learners indeed*, they shall experimen-

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tally Know all saving Truths, and this Knowledge shall make them *Free*, viz. from their former Ignorance and Blindness. When *St. Paul* reckons it as a Qualification of a *Deacon* that he must hold the mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience, (*1 Tim. 3. 9.*) he intimates that we must keep a *Good Conscience* if we would keep the Faith, that a *Virtuous Practice* preserveth as well as promoteth the Truths of the Gospel. Let me add That Remarkable Text of *St. Peter*, *2 Epist. chap. 1. v. 8.* whereafter the Apostle had exhorted them to all *Virtnes and Graces*, he adjoyns This as an *Incouragement*, *If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* If you be fruitful in *Good Works*, you shall also be fruitful in *Knowledge*. Your *Understandings* shall be informed according to the *Proportion* of your *Upright Lives and Conversations*. There is an other Text which is not taken notice of, It is *Rom. 12. 2.* *Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.* As much as to say, If we be not conformable to this wicked World, i. e. the *Evil Manners and Practices* of it, but be transform'd by the renewing of our Mind, i. e.

live a holy and virtuous Life, we shall be able to know and discern what the Will of God is. And to the Canonical Scripture I might add some Places out of the Apocryphal Writers, who though they are not to be reckon'd as Inspired and Infal-
 lible Authors, yet because they suggest many Truths which are of Good Use in our Lives, it will become us to Attend to them. You hear the Author of the *Book of Wisdom* speaking thus, * *They that put their trust in the Lord* (which are General terms to express Godliness and Holiness) *shall understand the Truth.* And the Wise Son of Sirach thus, † *If thou desirest Wisdom, keep the Commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee.* And again, ‖ *He that keepeth the Law of the Lord getteth the Understanding thereof.* All which Confirmeth this Great Truth that our Understandings are Improved by Holiness; that Knowledge thrives no where so well as under the Pedagogy of Virtue; that if we Live well, This will Rectify our Notions and Judgments, and Certainly put us into the possession of Truth.

2ly. I will shew that this is so in the very Nature of the Thing it self. For first, Purity and Innocency of Life Dispose us for the Receiving Communications from God, and being Partakers of His Will. Integrity

* *Wisd.* 3. 9.† *Eccles.* 1. 26.‖ *Eccles.* 21. 11.

tegrity and Piety (as well as an Excellent Temper of Mind) were the Previous Qualifications of those Persons whom God made choice of in Old times to bestow the Spirit of Prophecy upon, whereby his Will was Imparted to the World. And now under the Gospel This is the grand Prerogative of Sanctity that it Purgeth and Cleareth the Intellectual Eye, for the entertainment of Christ's Doctrine and the Dictates of the Spirit, and for the better Understanding of the Necessary Duties of Religion. Holiness most successfully conducteth our Notions, and is a Friend to Wisdom. The Practise of Virtue Disposes and Qualifies us for the farther Theory. The Inward Purgation of our Minds from the Animal Life, and a Real Touch and Experiment of Goodness Capacitate us for the Clearer Discerning and Comprehending of Divine Principles. And that you may be Convinced of this that there is in Holy Men this Great Capacity to apprehend and entertain heavenly Maxims of Undeniable Verity, be pleased to remember that the Motions of our Faculties have a Near Alliance and Affinity with one another. The Understanding, Will and Affections are very Intimately Acquainted, and hold Correspondence and Familiarity with one another. Their Neighbourhood

hood confers much to This Friendship; or rather, because they are but Different Modifications of the same Soul, they Sympathize in their Operations. Man is of a Piece. The Understanding, Will and Affections are Unisons. If one is Concern'd, the others are so too. Now then, by Real Holiness the Will and Affections being Changed, it will follow that there must be a Great Change and Amendment in the Understanding. When our Refractory Wills and Turbulent Desires are subdued, when these are *Defeated* and *Purged* (as the *Pythagoreans* used to express it,) we must needs find a Strength and Increase in our Rational and Perceptive Powers: our Minds will be Enlarged, to receive Greater Discoveries, and to see further into the nature of things. Our Unruly Affections, and the Disorders of Self-Will being quelled, *Reason* is now suffer'd to Rule, and *Truth* then cannot but be Befriended. Of all the Affections *Love* being the Chief and most Powerful, if *This* be Rectified, our Knowledge cannot but be exceedingly Improved and Exalted. The *Fire* of Love will be serviceable to *Enlighten* our Minds. The Enquiry after Divine things is Dry and Fruitless without Ardent Affection and a Devout Heart. Therefore we must gain the latter, that we may be Successful in the former; we must Love
God

God and Religion, that we may know them better. The Divine Amorist pronounceth, that *every one that Loveth, knoweth God* (and on the contrary) *he that Loveth not, knoweth not God*, 1 John 4. 7, 8. For Love enlargeth the Mind, and wideneth the Understanding, and thereby helps us to Judge aright. From whence it appears that a Loving Soul is the best Receptacle of Divine Truth. I might add also that *Humility* and *Self-denial* are necessary to Understand God's Word aright, and on that account likewise Men of Holy Lives, who are always the most Humble and Self-denying Persons, are most capable of Divine Truth. These in Knowledge out-shine all others : these are able to tell you the Precise Boundaries and exact measures of Good and Evil. They have a Clear and Distinct representation of those Divine Matters which Puzzle and Hamper the Thoughts of others, They are acquainted with the True *Parallax* of Truth and Error, they know the Just Distances of each. Moreover, This Account may be given why Real Holiness improveth Mens Understandings, *viz.* because the Notions and Principles of Religion, though never so Good in themselves, being suffer'd to lie Idle and Unactive in the Soul, and not being Rouzed by Practise and Exercise, do soon Vanish,

or

or at least are Obscured and Diminished; but on the contrary, they are Exalted and Envigorated by a Good Life, and are kept Inviolable by a daily Practise. *Motion* or the Tendency to it is the cause of *Light*, saith an Ingenious Philosopher. As it is in Physicks so it is in Ethicks; A Lively Motion, a strong *conatus*, a propensity and endeavour towards a Holy Practise procure and increase the Intellectual Light. Holiness and Purity are the best helps to Knowledge. But

3ly. It is thus also by the *Particular Blessing of God*, who is wont to Reward a Godly Life with singular Discoveries of his Will. Thus when the Lord said, * *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?* this is added as one reason of it, † *For I know him that he will command his Children and Household, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.* The Exemplary Holiness of this Patriarch, who was not content to be Good himself only, but promoted Religion and Holiness in his Family, was so acceptable to God that he would not hide from him his Secrets. Which is confirmed by the Prophet *Amos*, Chap. 3. Vers. 7. *Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the Prophets:* whence I argue, if God honours Holy Men

* Gen. 18. 17.

† Vers. 12.

Men above others, with the discoveries of his Secret Will, it is not to be question'd that he bestoweth on them a larger and more accurate Knowledge of his Revealed Will than he doth on other Men. This is promised by Christ as the Recompence of Holiness in *John 14. 21.* *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he shall be loved of my Father, and I will manifest myself to him.* This Divine Manifestation is annexed to Keeping the Commandments, living a Holy and Virtuous Life. This is the Peculiar Blessing which attends the Practice of Christianity, viz. a Wonderful Sagacity of Diving into and even Fathoming the Depths of Religion. This was eminently seen in the Apostles and Primitive Christians. Those poor Men were Harmless and Innocent in their Conversations, and God Rewarded their Integrity with a Surpassing Knowledge of Divine and Heavenly Truths. They had better Apprehensions and righter Conceptions of things than the Learned. As their Conversations were more Innocent, so their Knowledge was more Clear. They discover'd the Greatest Secrets and Mysteries in the World, and such as Those of Vast Abilities and Acquirements could not Conceive. As by a Good and Holy Life they Refined their Minds, so there

was

was a Singular Blessing which effected This. And the Like is to be experienced by All those who truly fear God and walk in his ways. To such as labour to do the Will of God sincerely He will vouchsafe Great Discoveries of Truth, he will Reveal those things to them which at present perhaps they have but Slender Apprehensions of: For this they may depend upon, that a Sincere Practise of what they know Inviteth God to Increase their Talent of Knowledge, according to the tenour of that Promise, *To him that hath, shall be given.* And thus whether you look at *the Thing it self*, or the *Promise of God*, it is evident that a Good Life is the Best Advancer of Knowledge, and that a Religious Practise is an excellent Furtherer of Truth.

Be fully Perswaded then of This, and let it have an Influence on your Lives. Be Incouraged to Practise Truth, to resign your selves wholly to the Guidance of it, if you are desirous to Improve your Knowledge, and to attain to the Best Notices of things in Religion. Those are Excellent Words of Gregory Nazianzen, ** Wouldst thou be skill'd in Theology, and even worthy of Divinity? Keep the Commandments, walk in God's Precepts, for Practise is the Way*

* Βέλαι θεολόγῳ καὶ ἡμίῳ καὶ τῆς θεότητος ἀξιῳ
ταῖς ἐντολαῖς οὐκ ἔχοντες, διὰ τῶν προσηλαγμένων ὁδῶν
πράξεις γὰρ ἐπιβάσεις θεωρίας. Orat. 29.

Way to come to Tbeory. Upon a due Con- sidering of This an * Eminent Person Ad- vised one to read first the *Latter* part of St. Paul's Epistle to the *Romans*, which treats of Christian Manners and Godly Practise, and then to Read the *former* part where the Profoundest Points of Divinity are handled. First Purify your Lives, and then your Understandings will be through- ly Illuminated. A Practical Christian hath a Great Advantage above others of gain- ing Right Apprehensions of things. These two do mutually help and forward one an other, viz. Good Principles and Holy Practise, for as Good Principles are the Ground of Holiness, so on the other side Holiness and Living a Good Life will pro- mote our Good Principles. Truth and Goodness are Companions. The *Urim* and *Thummim* go together: *Light* and *In- tegrity* advance each other. Purity and Righteousness are the best Keys to Open the Secrets of Religion, and Unlock the Mysteries of Christianity. Therefore that you may Increase in Divine Knowledge, it is especially requisite that you exercise a Good Conscience, and Act nothing a- gainst your Reason and against the Re- vealed will of God. Follow the conduct of *Piety*, and that will infallibly lead you into the way of *Truth*.

Lastly

Lastly, This One thing more I must ad-
 joyne (or else all that I have said before
 is Imperfect, yea Insignificant) that we
 ought to Pray with great fervency and im-
 portunity. This is to be looked upon as
 a *Proper Means* to gain Truth. We must
 earnestly Crave the Direction of Heaven,
 and Implore the Conduct of the Holy
 Spirit. For as *Error* is from *Satan* (He
 was the first Deceiver, he was a Liar from
 the beginning, and ever since he conspires
 with our own Hearts to delude us) He
 continually sowes Error, and Perverse
 and Damnable Doctrines amongst Men.
 It is the God of this World that blinds
 their Minds, so that the Light of Truth
 cannot shine unto them, 2 Cor. 4. 4. And
 who hath bewitched you? saith the Apostle,
 speaking to those Galatians who depraved
 the Truth. There is WITCHCRAFT in it:
 there is a Compact with the Devil: thus
 as Error is from Satan so Truth is from
 God alone. He who was God as well as
 Man opened the Understandings of the Apo-
 stles, that they might understand the Scrip-
 tures, Luke 24. 45. Of Lydia 'tis said,
 that the Lord open'd her Heart, that she
 attended (with Understanding) unto the
 things which were spoken of Paul, Acts 18.
 14. With relation not only to himself,
 but all other Christian Converts, the A-
 postle acknowledgeth that God, who com-
 manded

sendeth the light to shine out of darkness. Blind in their Hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *Cor. 2. 14.* God is the Author of all Divine Truth, and of the discovery of it made to us. An inward Enlightning and Irradiating the Mind by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for apprehending the Divine Mysteries which are contained in the Doctrines of the Gospel. We have reason to use Tertullian's Words, *Who ever found out the Truth without the Father of Lights? who ever knew Him without the help of Christ, or Christ without the assistance of the Holy Ghost? Thus the Whole Blessed Trinity must be our Guide to Divine Truth, or else we shall never attain to it. We are obliged then to Implore with all zeal and ardency this Heavenly Aid. Let every one of us Pray with David, † Lead me in thy Truth, and teach me: || O send out thy Light and thy Truth, let them lead me: * Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy Truth: † Open thou mine Eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law. We are sensible, O Father of Heaven, that there is a Natural Darkness and Blindness in our Minds:

II

we

* Qui veritas comperta sine Deo? cui Deus cognitus sine Christo? cui Christus exploratus sine Spiritu Sancto?
† Psal. 138. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119.

we cannot perceive the things of the Spirit: they are foolishness to us: And besides this Natural Indisposition, we are on every side beset with Impediments in our way to Truth. The Occasions of Error and Mistake are almost innumerable: we are miserably Misted, and it is not in our own power to direct our steps, and to keep the Right Path: We therefore with all Humility beg Thy Guidance: Do Thou vouchsafe to Direct and Assist us. Let thy Holy Spirit illuminate our Minds, that we may have a Clear Discovery of Thy Will, and that we may arrive to a sufficient Insight into all the Mysteries of the Gospel. Sanctify our Wills and Renew our Affections, that they may powerfully Influence our Understandings and Judgments, that so we may be enabled to Imbrace those Excellent Doctrines which Prejudiced and Perverse Minds refuse to entertain. Teach us to make use of all the Helps and Means which are in order to the Acquisition of Truth, and to Apply the several Remedies which are Prescribed us against Error and Falshood in Religion: and let us ever Look up to Thee for a Blessing upon the use of all.

To Incurage you in your Petitions let me remind you of the Promises which our Saviour hath made made, viz. that the

our saviour hath made, viz. that
me remind you of the Promise which
To encourage you in your Petitions let
a Blessing upon the use of all.
and let us ever look up to Thee for
Pius Pullator, Plurimus; invenit quoddam Temerarius Scruta-
tor in Aethiopia non potest. Bernard. Serm. 24. in Cantica.
Pius Pullator, Plurimus; invenit quoddam Temerarius Scruta-
tor in Aethiopia non potest. Bernard. Serm. 24. in Cantica.

F I N I S.

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the Learned Reader may easily correct.



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